

THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE LIFE

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BY

C. J. SHEBBEARE, D.D. OXON.

Rector of Stanhope, Chaplain to H.M. the King;

Master of the Wear Valley Beagles;

Formerly Wilde Lecturer in Natural and Comparative Religion in the
University of Oxford, Lecturer in Pastoral Theology in the Uni-
versity of Cambridge, Select Preacher, Oxford, 1915-17,
Select Preacher, Cambridge, 1927, President of the Oxford
Society of Historical Theology, 1938, Member
of the Archbishops' Commission
on Doctrine

OXFORD

Printed at the Shakespeare Head Press
and sold by Basil Blackwell

1939

By the same author

Religion in an Age of Doubt. (*Robert Scott* 1914)

The Challenge of the Universe. (*S.P.C.K.* 1918)

Problems of Providence (*Longmans* 1927)

(*Jointly with Mr Joseph McCabe*)

The Argument from Design Reconsidered

(*R.P.A.*, published in America as *The Revelation of God in Nature*)

TO
MY WIFE

PREFACE BY THE DEAN OF ST PAUL'S

I CONSIDER it an honour to be allowed to write a few words of introduction to Mr Shebbeare's book, even though I cannot suppose that a work by him needs any preliminary commendation. Those who are interested in the philosophy of religion have long known Mr Shebbeare as one of the most learned and indefatigable students of the subject. In this book he has attempted, in my judgment with great success, to present the subject of the Future Life in a manner which is both philosophical and intelligible to the general reader. Only those who have themselves tried to do the same kind of thing can understand how difficult it is to avoid obscurity on the one hand and superficiality on the other. Among the merits of Mr Shebbeare's discussion must be reckoned that of facing difficulties which most theologians pass over with vague phrases or an appeal to mystery. Some of the conclusions to which he is led, specially those concerning the satisfaction of the life of the blessed, will be startling to many Christians, and I confess that I am conscious of a certain recalcitrance in myself when I am asked to conceive Homeric heroes continuing their experience in Heaven—but then I have always heartily disliked Homeric heroes. But the great merit of Mr Shebbeare's treatment of the problem is that it is firmly set in the context of belief in God. This is absolutely right. For spiritual religion the question whether or not there is a life beyond death has no interest except in so far as that life promises growth in the knowledge of God; nor is there, as it seems to me, any substantial reason for believing in a future life except on the presupposition that God is and that He is love. At the same time I should be inclined to give greater weight to such confirmatory evidence as may be derived from psychical research than Mr Shebbeare is prepared to do, while confessing, as we must, that the facts are deplorably confined and questionable. The fading of the immortal hope from many minds

at the present time is an alarming symptom. When man repudiates the eternal background of life and comes to believe that his destiny is confined within the few years of this earthly existence his personality begins to wither and dignity to depart from his hopes and actions. Only when we believe that we are greater than we know are we capable of the tasks which the present life imposes on us. It appears to me that the decay of an effective faith in 'the life of the world to come' has not, on the whole, been due to conscious and reasoned rejection but to the action of non-rational causes arising from the character of a scientific civilization. To meet the situation we need not dogmatic assertions but rational discussion. We need to have the idea explained and the grounds for accepting it explored. Mr Shebbeare has notably contributed to this necessary debate.

W. R. MATTHEWS.

The Deanery,
St Paul's, E.C.
May 1939.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

ANY honest modern book on the Future Life must give the impression—at least on a first reading—that it raises more difficulties than it solves. It does not follow that the book is therefore worthless. It is very well worth while merely to show the difficulties with which the very conception of a Future Life is burdened. If a lively consciousness of these difficulties is joined with a firm belief in a life to come—or even with the mere conviction that such a life is sufficiently probable to be worth discussing—this combination may have a special value.

In the following pages I have tried first to state the popular argument; and especially to state it in the form in which it presents itself to those who feel strongly that a Heaven worthy of the name must continue to us not only opportunities of moral effort, but also all those delights and activities which we have most cared for on earth.

I have then dealt with certain difficulties with which the belief in a Future Life is beset. The difficulties about Space and Time—about infinite extension and continuance—are present to almost every thinking mind. No theory of a Future Life can afford to ignore these difficulties. Nor can they be dealt with effectively except by a thoroughgoing philosophical criticism. Such a criticism, I am convinced, can be written in plain and untechnical language, and can be made intelligible to any person of ordinary education who will take the trouble to master it. Thus I have ventured to deal with the Idealist's criticism of Space and Time in the present volume.

Besides this, I have dealt elsewhere—in a book written not for the general reader but for the philosophical specialist—with the criticisms which disciples of Kant and Hegel will make upon my argument and conclusion: and also with certain criticisms which are implicit in philosophies of more modern date, for example, those of M. Bergson, Signor Croce and Mr Wittgenstein. In this more technical book I have re-

ferred to the philosophy of Spinoza, and also to controversies in which various modern writers—Prof. Alexander, Dr Whitehead, Mr Lloyd-Morgan, Prof. Einstein, Sir James Jeans, Mr J. M. Keynes, Prof. Bosanquet, Mr Joachim, Mr Ayer, Dr von Hartmann, Prof. N. O. Lossky—have taken part.

The most important of the problems we have to face springs from the philosophy of Hegel. Hegelianism teaches the ‘unreality of the finite.’ Nothing, according to this doctrine, is true which can be stated in a single proposition: nothing can be seen truly except in its full context, and the full context of everything is the Universe as a whole.

Thus to claim eternal existence for the isolated individual is to assign too high a value to something merely finite.

The untruthfulness of the single proposition may perhaps be best met by pointing out that all our discussions imply the reality of *difference of opinion*. If I think one thing and my Hegelian critic thinks another, how can this plain fact be admitted except on the hypothesis of two real substances which have different sets of attributes? I am one, and the Hegelian critic is the other. If we treat the real whole as one single substance, then somehow we must admit that *part* of it forms a judgment which another part rejects. Surely we might just as well speak at once of two substances, or two real persons, as other people do. Against the Hegelian attitude to the ‘finite,’ we might also fairly say that the deepest and richest of human experiences, penetrating sympathetic and appreciative love, is satisfied with nothing short of two real conscious individuals.

But, obviously, a merely ‘common-sense’ reply of this kind is not enough. Hegel defends his most startling statements by the closely knit fabric of his Logic, of which they are in his opinion the outcome. Unless we can show *lacunae*—missing links of connection—in what Hegel presents as a ‘chain’ of categories, we have not really met his criticisms. Certainly a theology or a philosophy is unsatisfactory which leaves the Hegelian Logic as an un-reduced fortress in the rear.

I have therefore tried to show that the Hegelian chain is

broken at two points at least; first, at the transition from Being Determinate to Being-for-Self; secondly at the transition to Essence.

At the transition to Being-for-Self (*fürsichseyn*) the argument is that whatever has determinate being derives its whole nature from *something outside itself*: from what limits it: from what it is *not*. Hegel has already shown correctly that whatever is thought under the category of Being is thought under the category of Being Determinate. But if what has 'determinate being' is wholly dependent for its nature on what is outside itself, and has no nature of its own, Determinate Being is not a category in which the mind can rest. If this is so, the mind would be driven forward to some conception which unites the positive and negative elements in Being Determinate—to some such conception as Being-for-Self.

Now it is true that we express determinate character in words which imply limitation and negation. But is the fact that we express determinate character in language derived from spatial limits a sufficient foundation for all that Hegel builds upon it? Is he not relying too much upon mere etymology? The 'definite,' no doubt, means etymologically 'that which is limited.' Take, then, a case where we know the character of something quite apart from our knowledge of that with which we contrast it. Sometimes the positive knowledge is prior to the negative. Take a blue patch. It is not true that the *whole* nature of its blueness consists in its difference from other colours: or is constituted wholly by the fact that it is *not* green, *not* red, etc., etc. It is just because it is blue that we distinguish it from these other colours. As Hegel is speaking here of simple qualities, this example is quite a fair one. It is only by over-insistence on etymology that 'definite character' can be made to seem a self-contradictory notion—to imply that what *a thing itself is* is to be found wholly in what it is *not*.¹

Hegel thus appears to treat the notion of determinate being

¹ See Dr McTaggart's *Commentary on Hegel's Logic*, p. 32. He interprets Hegel as meaning that 'as we advance' we get to the notion of a partly self-centred reality. The thing has its nature not *in* what is outside itself, but through what is outside itself. But what was there to prevent our recognizing a partly self-centred reality from the beginning?

quite unfairly. But if he has not shown that any contradiction exists, he has not shown that we 'must advance beyond it.'

Is there not also another weak link at the transition to Essence (*Wesen*)? Is Essence really deduced from the categories of Being?

We know the meaning of Essence in Hegel's sense from examples: e.g. the 'essence' of thunder. What—in plain English—is thunder? It is the result of the rushing together of air previously divided by lightning. The notion of this distinction—the 'two levels' of 'essence'—is very clear in the physical field. But if it were really deduced from the bare meaning of the categories it ought to work equally well in any field. This it does not do. In the mental sphere, for example, 'essence' cannot be identified with 'ground' as it can in the physical sphere. The dentist knows the 'ground' of my pain better than I do. He has the scientific explanation. But what the pain essentially is is clearer to me than to him. It is just against common-sense criticism of this sort that a dialectical chain ought to be proof.

Again, the defender of Hegel's Logic ought to state explicitly the working contradictions in the form of two definite propositions at each step. The fact that this has not been done clearly either by Hegel himself or by his disciples seems to warn us against taking for granted the connectedness of this dialectical chain.

I have thus given in outline my answer to any reader of this volume who should doubt whether I have given sufficient attention to the Hegelian Logic and the difficulties which it raises for the believer in a Future Life.

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NOTE

SEVERAL times in the following pages I have pointed out the limitations of the human imagination: our powerlessness to form, even in outline, a satisfactory picture of the heavenly life, or of the course of future events generally. We may legitimately make general and even particular demands upon a world which is to satisfy our standard of perfection. 'Without this, without that—without him, without her—Heaven would be no Heaven to me.' 'Without a certain event—e.g. without an open and acknowledged triumph of Christ and Christianity—the Universe must fall short of perfection.' But there are certain questions of a different sort which men ask. 'Are the Gospel sayings about the end of the world mere parables to teach us of God's judgments? Or will such a catastrophic end of the world as they describe really take place?' 'Will this earth be burnt? Or will our race perish from cold and dwindle down till only a few hardy survivors remain?' One of our ablest living theologians has said, 'Do not let us contrast ourselves with the early Church. *We are* the early Church.' He is confident that Christianity has before it a long earthly future. If, then, there is to be an 'end of the world,' will it come soon, or only after the lapse of long ages? With the answer to this question the present volume is not directly concerned.

Stanhope Rectory,
Co. Durham.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE Problem of the Future Life has a twofold claim on our attention. It claims attention, first, because of its intrinsic interest, even though in some religious circles the sense of its importance has waned: secondly, because it raises, in a singularly clear form, all the major problems of philosophy. Can we frame a system of conceptions under which the world in all its aspects can be thought out consistently and also explained? What, if anything, can we say about the general character of the Universe from which we can deduce that a Future Life is possible or likely or certain or infer the kind of Future Life it is reasonable to expect?

So far as the religious importance of the problem is concerned there has been a change of feeling. A century ago the beliefs in personal immortality and a personal God were taken as characteristic elements of a spiritual religion. If the man who sets great store by these beliefs is to-day accused of unspirituality, this criticism is due mainly to the school of Hegel.

Yet the currents of opinion are not setting all in one direction. There are those to whom the kind of heaven for which the plain man hopes, though harder to believe in, seems yet to be a more worthy object of faith than the sort of heaven in which only the Mystics would feel at home.

The modern attitude towards the Future Life is, in fact, hard to describe. Besides the thousands who believe quite honestly that the hope of heaven is a drug for the poor prepared by priests in the interests of the rich, there are others who hold that the effect, if not the intention, of such religious teaching is to divert men's minds from social justice. Some of us, again, are in revolt against all old-fashioned sentiments about death. Why should death convey a sort of canonization? Why is it a sacred charge to carry out the wishes of the

dead even to the certain detriment of the living? In a well-known book of memories a widow absorbed in her bereavement is said to have 'dwelt above all earthly considerations.' Why should attachment to a husband—a merely amiable sentiment while he is alive—become religious when he is dead? Is not the saying *Mors janua vitae* just part of a wide cycle of kindred superstitions?

Heaven, again, has been associated with a doctrine of rewards which robs morality of its purity. The recognition that the hope of a Future Life cannot be the basis of morality has tended to put us out of love with the Future Life altogether.

Yet these sentiments—like many others which we call typically modern—belong to a minority only. The old hope lives on, not always in a selfish form. The desire to renew broken friendships, the hope of glory for those who have suffered bravely, the philosophers' interest in the perfection of the Universe, are none of them selfish passions. Nor is the religious man's wish to find God faithful to His promises, nor the moral man's hope to attain elsewhere the purity here achieved only in part.

Even the hope of reward is not immoral, if it is not presented as the motive for conduct. We owe it to ourselves not to bear needless burdens. It is right to dissipate, if by honest argument we can do so, the depression which comes from the fear that history will end when life perishes from this planet.

Thus mankind will not readily dismiss the thought of the future life from its mind. Only those, indeed, who are fully convinced that such a life is impossible are justified in doing so. Again, it is only upon philosophical grounds that we can base either agnosticism or dogmatic denial. It is likely, then, that faith in a Future Life too, if reasonable at all, must similarly rest on a philosophic basis.

But, however attractive the subject may be, its difficulties are certainly immense. Can we conceive the Future Life in a form at once attractive and credible? Mr Galsworthy's aged man refuses to look forward to a Hereafter: sure that there will be no such future at all, or that it can contain nothing

that he would care for—flowers, music, pretty faces, cheerful company, and conversation. Now to offer to anyone as a hope of heaven a life which he cannot enjoy is manifestly useless. Yet there is nothing which more pointedly affronts modern decorum than anything which even distantly resembles the hope of a Mahometan paradise.

Again, can any conception of heaven satisfy at once the mystical and the non-mystical temperament—both those who rejoice in the succession of physical events, and those for whom succession and multiplicity seem evil? Can there be a Universe in which both a Nietzsche and a Schopenhauer will be at home? Yet the modern world has gained insight into the nature of good from each of these writers.

The traditional descriptions of heaven are due to three not mutually exclusive classes: the saints, the weary, the bereaved. Each has included its own predominant interest: eternal rest, the knitting of severed friendships, the beatific vision of God. It is the activities of life—those, say, of the dying engine-cleaner who hoped that in heaven God would grant him at least one engine and one oily rag—that are most conspicuously absent from these pictures, and most difficult to fit into their framework.

Such examples are far from exhausting the difficulty. 'No doctrine—positive or negative—of a Future Life,' said a well-known teacher, 'brings me satisfaction. I do not wish for extinction—at death or later. Yet to go on living for ever seems infinitely wearisome. Nor do I care to think of myself as absorbed in God. Nor do I find comfort in a doctrine of the unreality of Time. In the first place, I believe that Time is real: but if I thought it unreal, I do not see how that would help me.' When someone objected that we cannot have it both ways—that we cannot say that it is bad that conscious life should end, and also bad that it should continue—the speaker replied that nothing could alter the fact that to him no way of conceiving the future, neither extinction nor any form of continuance, brought any satisfaction. The frame of mind thus revealed is common.

Again, when Kant remarks that we all feel that this present

world is inadequate to the high demands of our nature, many would reply that an endless future so dwarfs our earthly life as to take from it not only sublimity but importance.

Have we, then, reached an *impasse*, or have the difficulties been overstated?

We must not minimize difficulties: yet there has perhaps been some exaggeration.

Is it certain, for example, that eternal existence must necessarily be tedious? In reading Dante's *Paradiso* we may feel—as Prof. Taylor does—that the arrival of a visitor from earth must have been a welcome diversion for the blessed. But the difficulty of *describing* heaven accurately may well be too great even for the genius of a Dante. Certainly we are not bound by all his tacit assumptions. May not the life of heaven be as full of variety as that of earth? Why should not bodily activity alternate there with mental—contemplation with action? May there not be intervals of rest—even of sleep? Need we hold quite literally that there will be no night there? We get weary, it is true, of each particular occupation, sometimes even of the pleasantest, but what we then desire is change not extinction.¹ This desire for change heaven might satisfy.

Doubtless a reflective man may feel the burden of eternity as such but when endlessness, from being a philosophical puzzle, becomes a personal oppression, this is generally due to morbidity of mind. To some men earthly interests seem to supply matter for enjoyment that could be endless.

How good is life, the mere living, how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy.

Is there any reason why in heaven we should not all be endowed with the vigorous vitality which the poet exhibited on earth?

At any rate, we need not conceive ourselves as bearing in heaven the whole burden of our eternal future, any more than those who believe in their own endlessness are conscious of

¹ Against Mr Bradley's statement that we do not dread extinction, set Prof. Huxley's horror at the thought that in 1900 he might know no more than in 1800. He would sooner, he said, be in hell.

bearing it now. It is for certain moments of reflection only. Further reflection may even remove it. At least we need not assume that the thought of endlessness must play a more prominent part in the daily life of heaven than it plays in our daily life on earth.

CHAPTER II

DIFFICULTIES OF IMAGINATION

IN popular discussions of the Future Life, needless assumptions meet us at every turn. The fear that a Future Life will dwarf the present into insignificance, goes with the tacit assumption that as the life of heaven proceeds our earthly history will fade more and more into the background. But if our present life has been the crisis of our struggle, why should not its memory remain green for ever? We may remember vividly for ever the great tribulation through which we have victoriously passed. The Book of the Revelation suggests that Heaven is but the perpetuation of the moment of victory. A hero is not lowered in character the moment his triumph is won. He may maintain for ever that attitude of will in virtue of which he won it. The memory of the struggle may continually grow clearer.

Why, again, should we conceive the heavenly life as stationary? A group of well-dressed English travellers stood before a fifteenth-century picture of saints in glory seated side by side on thrones. Their criticisms assumed that each saint was supposed by the painter to be confined for all eternity to the same position. What if one found oneself—they asked—between uncongenial companions? That St Thomas¹ had held that the saints in heaven 'move about, in order that their souls may be refreshed by the varieties of God's creation,' they could hardly be expected to know. But observation of pictures of similar date might have shown them the needlessness of their assumption.

¹ *Sum. Theol*, Suppl. lxxxii or lxxxiv, Art. 4.

Again, why should we fear to admit into heaven those bodily and sensuous pleasures which make up so much of our earthly happiness? 'If heaven is to contain wine and women, mirth and laughter—the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast—what attention shall we have to spare for the beatific vision?' The question is unjust to human nature. Even as man is here, the opportunity of sensual pleasure does not make him predominantly sensual. The competition of other interests is strong enough to crowd unrelieved sensuality out of the lives of most men. If this is so, where we see through a glass darkly, should not the competition of the nobler interests be still stronger where God is seen face to face?

Again, why assume that the life of heaven, if any heaven there be—must be lived in archaic surroundings? If heaven is to be the home, not only of the saints of old time but of generations still unborn, why should we thus shrink from modernizing its glories? An eighteenth-century clergyman is saddened at the thought that at death he must leave his books. Dr Johnson answers that this will be no loss, since he will carry the contents of them in his memory. He can say *Omnia mea mecum porto*. But to recall what one has read is a poor pleasure compared with reading. Why, then, assume that there are no books in heaven?

For pictorial purposes, no doubt, an archaic heaven is best. The paintings of Fra Angelico, the descriptions of the Apocalypse, gain unity from their limitations. When Dr Talmage protests against our accepting these limitations seriously—arguing that we shall find in heaven not only golden harps, but violins and pianofortes—the image he calls up is inharmonious. We picture Dr Talmage in a dress coat amid Tuscan angels. Yet, is he wrong in principle?

The question turns on the right use of the religious imagination. We cannot banish imagination altogether. If the believer tries to reject all picture-thinking, he will fail. He will also produce a state of mind contrary to his belief. He must inevitably picture himself as one day dying. If he refuses to form any picture of a life after death, he will, in fact, leave himself with a depressing picture of impending extinction. It

is important to get our picture-thinking as near the truth as possible.

But we must be perpetually on our guard. Even if we see fully the difference between imagination and thinking, it will still be true that if we try to describe the necessary ingredients of a satisfactory heaven in general terms, detailed images will inevitably come before us, of which the artistic effect will be bad. God may frame a vast, multifarious, yet ultimately harmonious universe, in which human interests of every kind may have their fulfilment, and all things of beauty their appropriate home. But we cannot imagine such a universe in detail. A new *Divina Commedia* will not be written in our day. However great the genius of the poet his task would be vastly harder than Dante's. We are conscious of more varied interests than Dante knew. Our perception, for example, of the contrasting tempers of Greek and Medieval Art is far more acute than his. If heaven is to satisfy our best aspirations all the great civilizations must bring their glory and honour into it. The detailed picture which should blend such elements into unity is beyond our imaginative powers. Yet we must not make heaven seem discontinuous with earth. Nothing could be more inartistic than a Universe which starts a vast number of themes and leaves them imperfectly worked out. The imagination, then, though claiming liberty in its own sphere must yet subject itself strictly to a self-denying ordinance. We may rightly say in general terms, and even with individual reference, 'Without this' or 'Without that'—'Without him' or 'Without her'—'Heaven will be no heaven to me.' But if we try to form the result of such statements into a single picture, it will have, like Talmage's sermon, the faults of the worst examples of eclectic art. A heaven so pictured would be like a fancy dress ball. We may conceive heaven as the closing act of the Drama of the Universe, and state its necessary ingredients in accordance with this conception. But the images which thus arise will not unite themselves into a satisfactory whole. When we require a presentation of heaven which shall satisfy us aesthetically, we must rest contented with such admittedly symbolical representations as are given by Dante, Fra Angelico, or St John the Divine.

CHAPTER III

ETERNAL LIFE

THE religious use of the Imagination—legitimate in its proper sphere—raises even more fundamental problems than those of the preceding chapter.

‘Since we no longer believe in a heaven above our heads, what’ it is asked, ‘can we put in its place?’

The very form of the question demands criticism. There is no more reason, as they knew even in the Middle Ages, to seek Heaven above our heads than beneath our feet. But have those who deny a ‘geographical heaven’ fully thought out their own position? Is their heaven a life of intellectual contemplation from which is banished all activity of the senses—in which men are deaf and blind, cut off from the grasp of human hands and the sight of human faces? We have no experience of a bodiless existence. Are they certain that such a life of thought without sense is even possible? The activities of sense are associated with the body: but every body must be somewhere in space.

They may answer that (as Berkeley argued) sense-experience is not dependent on Matter: that sounds may be heard even if there be no material *substratum* such as the vibrating string. Idealism will be dealt with later on. But Idealism denies Matter here as well as hereafter. It denies a geographical earth as much as a geographical heaven. Could anything be more grotesquely indefensible than to be Realist for this world and Idealist for the world to come?

Again, no solution is to be found in thinking of the soul as a sort of thin-blown body. If we ‘imagine spirits as made of a sort of thin matter, and so as existing just like bodies, although we call them disembodied’—if we then ‘think of this disembodied form as an alternative to human form, and suppose spirit to have somehow a purer existence apart from the human body’—this conception is surely, as Mr Bosanquet

called it, an error. 'Spirit,' he says, 'exists in the medium of consciousness, not in a peculiar kind of matter. The spiritualization of the natural body, is not to be looked for in an astral or angel body, but in the gait and gesture, the significance and dignity, that make the body of the civilized man the outward image of his soul.' An etherial body, continually floating upwards, demands geographical position just as much as a body of gross matter seated on a throne. To identify spiritual purification with the elimination of matter suggests Manichean rather than Christian notions. Christian purification is through the will. Is it not obvious, too, that a ghost—a 'gaseous vertebrate'—must be a poor substitute for a living man? Such a ghostly future cannot fill the place of the traditional Heaven.

A far worthier solution is offered by those who would substitute Eternal, for merely Future, Life. 'It is because we know,' says Dean Inge, 'what truth, beauty and goodness mean, that we have our part in the eternal life of God whose attributes these are. The eternal values are what I live with, and this *life* is more real than my passing earthly history.'

Yet this thought, though just, brings no complete solution. Suppose that this insight into the Good is itself a passing flash: that after knowing 'in this life only' the eternal values we sink into everlasting night. Such an end would not rob life of its dignity. We could die with *Nunc Dimitis* on our lips. A faith in eternal values gives us a stable foundation: but it may lack something of the triumph of the Christian death-bed. Is it not a matter of just regret if those who have known God are to know Him again no more for ever?

Our problem is how to modify satisfactorily the traditional conception. The complete answer will require a pretty thorough examination of the difficulties of Space, Time, Eternity. *Why* are we dissatisfied with the temporal and spatial conception of the Universe?

It is enough for the present to say that Time affords the hardest problem.

We can only find perfect rest in something—in God or the

Universe—which we conceive as *complete*. A Universe in Time is condemned to endless incompleteness. We can never say of it *Finis coronat opus*: for the end will never come. God—conceived as existing through Time—must be conceived as remembering separately every one of His past moments: but how can anyone remember every particular moment in a series of moments of indefinite length? It is impossible even to count such a series: *a fortiori* to remember each moment separately in detail.

Thus we are confronted by a kind of emotional dilemma. If we hold Time real, our religious feelings find no satisfaction. Either conscious life comes to an end, while Time continues on its course—in this case man is overcome by Time and Change, and he who would be the ‘spectator of all time and all existence’ is cut off before he has seen the end—or else life goes on as an endlessly incomplete process; a story without an end, a melody without a cadence. Can Idealism—can any philosophy—offer a less unpleasing conception?

This difficulty is widely recognized. Most people feel some discomfort about it: and means of escape are sought. ‘Time,’ say some, ‘is appearance not reality. Its real existence involves contradiction.’

Some apparent contradictions can certainly be shown. What is real is definite. Actual colour is definite colour. What has size, has definite size. Time, on the other hand, certainly has length. It is longer than this week. But it has no length in particular. Thus Time must be conceived contradictorily: as at once a *quantum* and not a *quantum*: as having size, but no size in particular. Here, otherwise than with Space, Idealism has support from the New Physics. ‘The nightmare of infinity,’ says Prof. Eddington, ‘still arises in regard to time. The world is closed in its space-dimensions like a sphere, but it is open at both ends in the time dimension. There is a bending round by which East ultimately becomes West, but no bending by which Before ultimately becomes After.’ ‘The difficulty of an infinite past is appalling. It is inconceivable that we are the heirs of an infinite time of preparation: it is not less

inconceivable that there was once a moment with no moment preceding it.¹

The difficulty, then, is real enough. But what of the Idealistic solution? If Time is not real, is all history, memory, and Physical Science false? The Idealist, indeed, seems hardly sincere. He denies matter, but he takes food. He denies Time, but wears a watch. If Time seems hard, Timelessness seems harder.

It removes *some* of the popular objections to Idealism to point out that Idealism *does not*—or should not—*address itself to the imagination at all*. We cannot ‘imagine’ Time away. Imagination is absolutely dependent on temporal and spatial pictures. No one is being asked to perform impossible feats: to imagine Space compressed to a point, or Time reduced to an instant.

Again, the Idealist does not cut himself adrift from his previous knowledge. In denying Time he is far from denying all real succession. He is, after all, sane. He does not abandon his knowledge—of history, say, or physical science—but merely changes the form of its statement. When he has once shown the contradiction involved in the assertion of Time’s reality, the first part of his task is at an end. The second part is to show, in Dr McTaggart’s words,² ‘of what reality’—since it does not really refer to a world passing in Time—‘the vast mass of our knowledge holds true.’

If Time and (by similar arguments) Space and Matter are swept away, what is left? One thing certainly remains: my own immediately present state of consciousness. This not even the extremest doubter can doubt. *Cogito ergo sum*. If the familiar maxim does not prove all that it has been thought to prove, it still proves something. My neighbour may be a ‘thing in my dream.’ My memory may be all delusion: but then at least the delusion exists. *I am here ‘remembering.’* Further, as a sane man, I am sure that memory is not *all* delusion. May it not be that the phases which I remember of my

¹ Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, p. 83.

² Spoken of the denial of Matter.

past history, though not really past are nevertheless real: just as the 'self' immediately present to me in direct selfconsciousness is real, despite the fact that imagination endows it with a temporal character which (if Time is not real) it cannot possess? May it not be that the truth about myself to which my memory bears witness is the truth concerning a succession of real, though non-temporal, conscious beings, each appearing to itself as in Time, and bound together into personal unity by various bonds—memory (of a distinctive type), causation, moral responsibility, and perhaps others—in which Time is not necessarily involved? The memory of what I call 'my own past' has some distinctive characteristics, a peculiar directness and intimacy, for example, on which I base the distinction between my own past and other people's.

This problem with others will be discussed later. The questions with which we are concerned at the moment are the following. If, say, the perception of this pen with which I write is a real event, though not really an event in Time, may not the same thing be true of what I call past and future experiences, whether mine or my neighbours'? Can the history of each man be regarded as the record of a series of connected but non-temporal 'conscious substances' and their experiences? 'Substance' in its primary sense, is simply 'that which has attributes.' Can we on the basis of such a theory put a reasonable trust—no one puts an absolute trust—in memory? Can we on this basis so state the rules by which we conclude from one experience to another—for example, from seeing a man wounded to his pain—as to justify our trust in them? Can we on this basis study history and Physical Science?

No one, of course, would suggest questions so difficult, except under extreme compulsion. But desperate diseases require desperate remedies. The most repulsive theory is better than to admit contradiction into one's thinking. At any rate—since no satisfactory conception of Future Glory can be stated in temporal terms—let us accept provisionally the conception of a succession which is real but not temporal, joined with the notion of human volitions and experiences as so connected that we can argue from one part of our experience to

another. Let us then see how far our religious hopes may be stated in terms of such a theory.¹

Meanwhile belief in a Future Life adds new difficulties. On earth my history has beginning and end. Even if at death my memory were quite complete, I should remember a finite number of experiences, not an infinite one. But if in heaven I look for unending happiness, how can I represent my heavenly existence in the form of a connected but not temporal series of conscious states, bound together by bonds of memory and causation? A series bound together in an order by memory is obviously not reversible. It must have a last member. Thus, while the earlier members may be conceived to find their happiness in looking forward to the later members of the series, what will be the feeling of those in whom the series is coming to its end? We must either bring back the old nightmare of infinity, which the whole theory is constructed to avoid: or else must conceive the final member as confronted with a blank. The whole series then becomes a march towards a goal of nonentity.²

¹ The difference in memory of my own experience and another person's is not all in degree of vividness. I was arguing this very point with a well-known philosopher when the burning ash from his pipe fell on his hand. My impression of his suffering was probably almost as acute as his own. But I distinguish his pain from my shock by reflecting that the former was known to me only by inference from his acts and words, whereas the latter was remembered directly and needed no inference at all. If someone objects that quite apart from a Future Life we have an infinite number of conscious experiences—we see, e.g. a train passing into a tunnel and occupying every one of an infinite number of positions—the answer is that in remembering its transit we remember no infinite number but barely a dozen distinct positions. There is no reason to think that we saw many more than we remember. In watching a boomerang we see several curves and several sharp corners. But certainly we have no infinite number of distinct experiences.

² See Chap. XV, page 87, below.

CHAPTER IV

ABSORPTION INTO GOD

IN these perplexities men have sought comfort in the hope of our final absorption into God. What is the intellectual value of this phrase?

It is, of course, a metaphor. Yet even metaphors have meaning. If we say that the soul sinks into God as raindrops sink into the river, or that our lives flow into Him as rivers flow into the sea, part of our meaning is that the soul finds ultimate rest in God, that our lives find in Him fulfilment, that He is the goal which satisfies.

The metaphor need not imply loss of personal identity. Is there, in this suggestion that the soul may be absorbed in God, anything more mysterious than lies in the common experience of finding comfort in our own future? We find comfort during a night of pain in the assurance of relief in the morning. This comfort is in something outside my present self. My future self is just the goal of my present desire.

Can we, then, conceive that our lives—both in that part of them which we call our earthly life and in a part of them which we think of as coming afterwards—are moving on towards God, Who in one of His aspects¹ is our goal? In terms of the theory just outlined the latest 'self' of each personal series would stand to God as the earlier members do to the later: the last member will stand to God as the penultimate does to the last. The very next experience to which my final phase looks forward—standing as close to it as my next moment does to me now—will be that state of full consciousness of the whole which we call the divine Omniscience. We should pour at length our memories into God, as youth pours its memories into middle life, as middle life pours its memories into old age. God, not nothingness, is that to which the series is being led. It is a familiar thought that God is 'nearer

¹ See note at end of chapter.

than hands or feet,' and nearer than our own past and future since we enjoy these in Him. If God is Alpha and Omega, human experience has in Him both its Origin and its Conclusion. There is not implied here any succession which is really temporal. And if God knows all things, to flow into Him need not bring loss of personality, since in Him all differences may be remembered and preserved.

In religious teaching metaphors are all too common: and are used often without due responsibility. But metaphor may be our best expression of some demand, some element which God and the universe, if perfect, must include.

This metaphor, however, raises several difficulties. Is God to be conceived as ultimately solitary? When all the rivers have flowed into the sea, will there be no more rivers? If God is all in all, is He all alone? Must not the all-inclusive be always solitary?

Such questions must be considered in relation to both the two rival theories, the temporal and non-temporal theories of reality.

For at least ninety-nine hundredths of his waking life the Idealist himself thinks in terms of Time. Yet we are all vaguely dissatisfied with this kind of thinking, and the puzzles about infinity and eternity to which it leads. This dissatisfaction implies that a non-temporal conception of reality is possible, for, if Time is self-contradictory, reality must be non-temporal.

Nor must the two theories be mixed. Temporal pictures, on the one hand, and suspicions of their inherent incorrectness on the other, cannot be ranged side by side. The belief that Time is real, and the belief that it is appearance not reality, cannot be united within one representation. The one contradicts the other. We should hesitate, then, to speak of 'Time in a background of the Timeless' unless we are very clear what we mean by such a figure.

Now, quite apart from doubts about Time, religion has conceived God as 'knowing the end from the beginning': has conceived all things, past, present or future as equally present to Him. Even then, if at length we are swallowed up of him,

still we, as we are now, may be for ever objects of His love. Though gathered into one in Him, we may be as real as He. The notion of absorption taking place in Time—of God absorbing new elements into His life (albeit from the wealth He has Himself created) and so becoming other than He was before—is not wholly satisfactory. Yet its defects are but part of the general defect inseparable from all temporal pictures. The question will arise whether the best picture of the heavenly reality which imagination can frame should include this notion of our being swallowed up in God, and thenceforward continuing to exist for ever in Him. Should we rather picture ourselves as for ever separate beings, ever free to pass at will from the enjoyment of one of His divine perfections to the enjoyment of another? It is not an insuperable difficulty if we cannot say which of the pictures is absolutely the best representation of the non-temporal reality. Whether the non-temporal conception of the world adds to our difficulties or eases them, we shall see in a moment.

Again, another problem confronts us. If we ourselves exist only in God—*Quicquid est in Deo est*—is such existence consistent with our full reality? Are we real enough for God to enjoy our companionship?

The 'impenetrability' which some have regarded as the mark of personality is a misleading term. The plain man never seems to regard the belief that God reads our thoughts as plainly absurd. He never says that his thoughts are so entirely his own that to 'read' them is impossible. In various ways we 'indwell' one another. We follow one another's reasoning. Men have even fainted at the breaking of another's man bone. If God is fully omniscient He must feel my feeling. He must feel it as His own, yet distinguish Himself from it. Is such 'indwelling' unexampled? I feel the sensations belonging to one limb—'my foot is one mass of pain.' This sensation is within me: yet is an object of knowledge to me, and I distinguish myself from it. This is still clearer when part of the body is associated with a passion—becomes (say) 'one trough of lust'—which the man as a whole is condemning and resisting.¹ Is

¹ Cf. Horace's *animus mutans*, Sat. 1, 2, lines 68, 69.

it, in principle, impossible for God to know me from within, and yet to distinguish Himself from me? For Spinoza¹ my mind is 'part of the infinite intellect of God.' Spinoza's phrase admits the claim that my thought is my own and original: better than phrases which suggest that I am but thinking at second-hand thoughts already familiar to God. I can be thus conceived as the organ of the divine knowledge. It is only through that part of Him which I am that God knows this or that. But the whole may quite well know the part completely, without sinking to simple identity with it. Such divine indwelling is consistent with communion with God.

But could even absorption into God deliver us from the old nightmare of the endless future? Granted that we are to find our goal in God, can we help asking whether this life in Him is to go on for ever? Is not either answer equally unsatisfactory?

This last question assumes that we really desire an indefinite length of conscious experience: that nothing but endless continuance would satisfy us. Is this true?

We dislike the prospect of life 'coming to an end.' Treating Time as real, we do not wish life to end while Time continues. But we do not desire an indefinite extent of experiences as such, or for its own sake. We resent incompleteness. Our desire is for perfection. Since that which ends while Time continues is imperfect, endlessness—everlasting happiness—becomes for us the symbol, the *schema*, of this perfection. But it is a mere symbol. We cannot consistently say both that the perfect alone can satisfy us and also that we demand endless continuance. The endless can never, as we saw, be perfected. It is ever unfinished. The truth is (though this paradox may raise questions) that a perfect Universe or life must be imagined as unlimited, but *thought* as limited.

A world that exists in Space and Time must either be extended indefinitely: or surrounded by an infinite amount of circumambient emptiness. God, as non-temporal and non-spatial, is exempt from these alternatives.

It may be objected that the actual Universe (whether con-

¹ *Eth.*, II, 11.

ceived as the Theist conceives it or otherwise) must always be surrounded by an infinite ocean of unrealized possibility. But a philosophy which conceives the world as fully explicable in all its details, is implicitly conceiving it as necessary—by an ultimately intelligible necessity—at every point. If we can establish a philosophy which justifies the unceasing search for explanation, we shall have shown that nothing but the actual is in the full sense possible. The ocean of unrealized possibilities are *prima facie* possibilities only.¹ If such a philosophy can find justification for stating itself in theistic terms, its God will include not only all that is, but all that really could be. In such completeness the soul may find rest. The longing for endlessness is stilled. There is no more room for suspicion that, unless life can be indefinitely extended, there will always be something real as an unattained goal beyond us.

These conceptions, however, can play no part in our picture-thinking. The religious imagination has its legitimate place: and for it no representation of a perfect Universe will be adequate unless it contains the picture of man living to all eternity *a parte post* with Him Who has lived from all eternity *a parte ante*—a life with God of endless holiness and bliss.

This is our imaginative approximation to the truth. The word 'approximation' contains within it a superlative. There are, of course, relative approximations—'This water-colour brings us as near to the truth as pictorial art can bring us,' 'Milton's is the very best representation of Christian belief which is possible within the limits of the Epic tradition,' 'Such and such is the best representation of heaven which is open to the man of mystical temperament.'

But can we not attain something more absolute? Is there no such thing as the very best representation which imagination on its own terms can supply? It is, surely, possible to state, in a way valid for all mankind, some, at least, of the elements which such an imaginative approximation to the truth about the universe must include. Men, for example, who see no reason for holding that this universe is perfect, would yet

¹ *Prima facie* may be illustrated from Euclid. 'The angle may be greater, smaller, or equal. But it is not greater. . . .'

agree with the believer about many of the elements which its perfection would involve. It is just because they think some of these to be unattainable, that they adopt an attitude of pessimism and unbelief.

The four chapters here concluded are purely introductory. They are intended to show that the Future Life is a subject of perennial interest and that a solution of its problems, though difficult, is not hopeless.

From this point onwards, we shall proceed to ask what grounds there are for belief in a Future Life at all (Chapter V). If we find that, like other beliefs, religious and otherwise, this belief depends ultimately upon a conviction of the general rationality of the world, we shall consider how far this general principle is well grounded (Chapter VII) and again, how far we can draw specific conclusions from it (Chapters X to XIV). The argument so developed will then be reviewed in the light of those difficulties about Space and Time which have already been mentioned.

NOTE TO CHAPTER IV

The phrase 'God in one of His aspects' needs defence. Sometimes we speak of God as the whole (Rom. xi, 36; 1 Cor. viii, 6; Col. 1, 16, 17; Acts xvii, 28); sometimes as something less than the whole. If God is merely omniscient—a conscious being with knowledge of everything, but not including within Himself all the truths and realities which He knows, then there is something outside God: and, since truth is prior to anyone's knowledge of it, He would occupy only a secondary position in the Universe.

But do these two usages imply two different theologies? Or are they merely different senses given to the same word? We are, at least, more evidently within God in the sense in which He is the whole than in the sense in which He is merely the omniscient being. Further, we must ask, whether God is to be conceived as including within His own conscious life all sentience: so that outside the consciousness of God there is no other conscious life at all.

In Chapter IV a somewhat novel suggestion is made: namely, that we may interpret 'absorption' in relation to the conception (which is forced upon us if we believe that what memory recalls is on the whole *real*, but not really past) of each man's life history as consisting of a succession of states of consciousness which appear to themselves to be in Time but are really timeless, connected among other things by the bond of memory. Can it be that God stands to us as my present stands to my immediate past: that the last member of this succession may pour its memories into Him as the memories of my youth are received by my mature self: so that at the end of my separate career I may look forward to Him as the very next stage of my personal history, connected as intimately with me as is my present with my immediate past? If we speak of God as thus drawing human memories into Himself, the phrase need not imply temporal succession. There are examples of causation¹ which do not involve sequence in Time.

It is not at all implied in Chapter IV that the final phase is that which appears in the temporal series as the closing of our earthly life: nor that God knows only so much of our experience as we happen to remember in our final personal phase. For one thing (in a world in which nothing occurs without sufficient reason) omniscience involves *a priori* knowledge of every occurrence. No doubt the final phase of my personal existence *might* gather up into itself all the memories of the past. But we need not confine God's empirical knowledge to this supposed 'memory' by which He draws into Him our stored experiences. This 'memory' must be conceived as an experience of a quite specific kind. The whole conception arose in an attempt to interpret absorption. But in itself the notion is not unattractive that a shower of human memories may make up a great part of God's life and bliss. If God is related to us in a specific way—namely, because our memories pass into Him as the memories in youth enrich adult life—

¹ See below, Ch. XV.

this is consistent with the existence of another relation too¹—that which springs from His knowing us, through and through, by feeling and sharing all our feelings and thoughts.²

The phrase 'one of His aspects' is thus perhaps justified. We are thinking of Him in one of His various relations with us.

It is worth while to point out that if God is fully omniscient He must know and feel *all* passions—not only the love of a Romeo for a Juliet, but the desire of a rat for its mate or of a fly for carrion. This might seem to be a new difficulty: but in truth the divine knowledge becomes easier to conceive if we recognize that God must know certain sights and odours not only as they appear to us who loathe them, but as they appear to creatures to whom they are pleasant.

¹ Two ways of knowing the very same fact are possible e.g. I may know that ten seconds ago the sea was stormy, both (a) by memory, and (b) by direct perception plus inference. The latter method would be sufficient without memory. If the sea is very rough now, a calm sea cannot change to extreme roughness in ten seconds. Thus the two relations suggested in the text involve no difficulty.

² Can I reconcile *Quicquid est in Deo est* with worship? Someone said, 'I cannot worship that of which I am a part.' The reply was, 'I cannot worship that of which I am *not* a part.' Certainly I can only worship that which has something in common with me—namely, the same rationality which I share. I should be inclined to say simply, 'I can worship anything which is worthy of worship. If I, being evil, am part of a world which as a whole is good, then the whole in which (or Whom) I am is worthy of worship.'

The emotion of reverence on which worship is based is primarily owed to the law, standard, or ideal, of which, as faith holds, the world is the realization. Faith regards God or the Universe as the embodiment of this ideal. But if it were not embodied its claim to our reverence would stand undiminished. It would be a kind of snobbery to make its claims depend upon its success in asserting them.

CHAPTER V

THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

Is evidence in place here at all? 'To give evidence,' it is said, 'for a spiritual truth is to degrade it.'

There are cases where this is so. We degrade morality if we base its principles upon evidence of the pleasure or profit to which they may lead. Judgments of value cannot be based upon a collection of facts. But we shall see if we reflect that this is not the same with other classes of spiritual truths which assert not values, but their realization.

I. What of the evidence, then, offered in the name of Psychological Research?

This evidence must not be ignored because the manner of its presentation is sometimes offensive to our taste. Here, as elsewhere, the claims of open-mindedness are paramount.

But unless it is supplemented by preconceptions, this evidence will not carry us far. The bare proof that a mind may survive its body would have great negative value. But apart from religious faith it would not confirm the believer's hope, and might even add to our terrors.¹

Again, the difficulty of this kind of proof is great. The rival theory of telepathy offers generally a readier explanation of the revelation of secrets supposed to be known to one dead person only. Someone now living may have divined them by telepathy, and may be now communicating them by the same means. Telepathy—whatever evidence it can offer for its own reality—is at least the less violent hypothesis.²

Even a communication 'inimitably characteristic of some deceased person' would carry conviction to a small group only: and could hardly be the basis of a general faith.

¹ Cf. *animula, vagula, blandula*.

² Even if a medium found treasure buried in King John's day, there is always the possibility that the secret was handed on by supernatural means.

II. Others look to a different quarter. 'We can only know about the future life what is taught us by the Church or the Bible.'

It is interesting that this opinion has no claim to be called orthodox.¹ Also it is intrinsically unreasonable. If we hold that a belief in a good God is well grounded, we shall draw conclusions from it: about the way, for example, in which He will treat His creatures in this world and elsewhere.

Continuous tradition—to which the Church and the Bible bear witness—is valuable, but it is not the exclusive source of religious knowledge. If we confined ourselves to texts and pronouncements, we should leave many legitimate questions unanswered. Again, the authority of the Church and Bible rests on our belief in God: and direct arguments based on belief in God are often more obviously trustworthy than the authoritative statements. In Christendom the hope of a Future Life has been strengthened and clarified by belief in Christ's resurrection. But even the argument from miracle is dependent upon theistic belief. Distrust of reasoning is now common. It is worth while, then, to point out the theoretical background upon which authority and the argument from miracle alike depend.

III. Again, it is argued that the soul is essentially indestructible. Some would seek their evidence in this argument. 'If,' argues Plato, 'the soul is not destroyed by its own special malady—wickedness—it cannot be destroyed by anything.'²

'The soul being un compounded is indissoluble.'³ 'Since it resists bodily passions, it cannot be the mere product of the body itself.'⁴ Plato has put these and similar arguments into the mouth of Socrates. Socrates has convinced his friends that the soul exists before birth.⁵ This belief, he shows them, is inconsistent with their previous facile notion⁶ that the soul is the product of the body as harmony is of the lyre. He goes on to argue that the soul must continue after death.

¹ See St Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, Part I, Qu I, Art. I Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 4, II, 79 (cf I, 2 and 37), I, 28 and 37

² Rep. 609A.

³ Phaedo, 78C

⁴ 86A, 94C, etc.

⁵ 77C, 87A, 92A, 95C.

⁶ Phaedo, 92C.

The importance of these dialogues does not depend wholly on the correctness of this particular reasoning. The contrast between bodily and other pleasures—and also the doctrine of Ideas (the only stable objects in a changing world)—are of more concern to Plato than this argument from indestructibility. Yet this argument has had already a great effect, and may continue its influence in the future.

If this argument is here passed over somewhat briefly, this is for two reasons. In the first place, no argument of this kind can well resist the criticisms of Kant. Even if the soul cannot perish by *decomposition*, may it not still perish by *extinction*—or (to use the phrase which Kant invents to meet the special arguments of Mendelssohn) by *elanguescence*?¹ Again, does the unity of the soul as we know it prove the existence of such a tendency to continuance as implies that some special agency is needed to destroy it?

The soul, no doubt, is not fully explicable on purely physiological principles, just as music is not fully explained by a study of vibrations. But, as there is no music without vibrations, may it not still be true that there is no soul without body? Again, may not a knowledge of rational principles be just as much physically conditioned as are our passions? Is the failure of the comparison between the lyre and the body sufficient support for all that Socrates would build upon it?

Again, is it sound to argue that the individual soul shares the unchangeableness of the Ideas which it knows?² Redness is unchangeable while red things change. But can we argue that, as opposite ideas such as life and death cannot change over into one another,³ so the soul which brings life to the body can never become dead? My soul is not a universal but a particular. My soul, so long as it remains a soul, cannot become dead.⁴ But may it not perish by extinction or elanguescence? Fire, so long as it is fire, is hot: but a particular fire may burn itself out.

Again, against later arguments such as 'The power not to

¹ *Crit. of Pure Reason*, German paging, 413, Meik., 245.

² *Phaedo*, 79E.

³ 104C

⁴ 106B Cf. 102E and 105A, see Jowett's *Summary*, p. 387.

be is no true power?—*Potentia ad non esse nulla est potentia*¹—(which are not to be ignored merely because they are now out of fashion), it is worth while to point out that my existence as a conscious being now and my existence as a conscious being at noon yesterday are not one fact but two. We may connect them by arguments which would prove both our pre-existence and our immortality. But such arguments when produced must be examined critically.

In the second place, such arguments, even if successful, do not support the hope which we are discussing. Socrates himself speaks of the soul as going to a good and wise God, and being delivered from ills.² Apart from such hopes, mere continuance might well seem evil.

IV. Different in character, and more relevant to our real interests, is the argument of Kant in his *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*.³

Kant virtually says that we cannot, while maintaining the moral attitude, hold that that *Summum Bonum* (*Weltbeste*) which morality pursues is unattainable. This *Summum Bonum* he conceives as the unity of morality with happiness. Reason, he argues, cannot bid us to seek the unattainable.

We might similarly argue that it is hard to say with conviction both 'This duty is of supreme importance' and 'It will make no difference in the long run whether you do it or not.' Yet he who believes in morality and dogmatically denies a Future Life⁴ has to make both these statements.

Is Kant right in stating that morality consists in the single attitude of pursuing the *Summum Bonum*? The singleness of this one comprehensive purpose seems vital to the argument.⁵ Even if the *Summum Bonum* is unattainable, is it not my duty to realize as much good as possible? Is not half a loaf better than no bread? Is not the aim of the moral man universal

¹ See, e.g., Gredt's *Elem. Phil. Aristotel*, Thom, I, p. 435 (1926).

² Phaedo, 80D, 81A.

³ Par. 87, and 88 (near beginning).

⁴ Kant's hesitation between affirming that the moral attitude justifies our assumption of a Future Life, and the more cautious assertion that it precludes dogmatic denial, may seem to cast suspicion upon the whole argument.

⁵ *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, see closing sentence of Par. 87.

rather than all-inclusive—to bring about good wherever it may be found, rather than to bring about the whole and complete good?

Thus, of the Kantian argument—as of the argument in the *Phaedo*—we may say that it does not give us a foundation for a belief in such a Future Life as will satisfy the aspirations of religion.

V. Thus we appear to be driven back to an examination of the old argument which bases the hope of heaven on the belief in God. This is one form of the attempt—already mentioned¹—to draw particular conclusions from a knowledge of the general character of the Universe.

The belief that the Universe is fundamentally good, can be stated (as sometimes by Plato)² in a non-theistic form. Indeed it is true that Theism itself rests on Optimism rather than Optimism on Theism. But Theism, none the less, is the natural form for Optimism to take. Thus the hope of heaven is likely to rest in the future, as in the past, mostly on a theistic foundation.

If sufficient reason can be shown for belief in a good God, then it is said, a heaven adequate to His goodness follows as a matter of course.

To many this argument carries complete conviction. 'This present world' seems to them plainly inadequate to God's full purpose. It is but part of a wider whole—a 'System within a System.' Like a machine with laws of its own in an industrial system which may interfere with it from without (as when we change our watches to Summer-time)—like an episode in a play with a metre of its own—this world may be subject to laws which are not the laws of the whole. Religion has hoped for bodies in heaven which shall be at once material and incorruptible.

¹ In first sentence of this book, Chap I, above.

² *Rep*, p. 517C.

CHAPTER VI

BELIEF IN GOD

MEN arrive at belief in God in various ways.

'We must listen,' says the preacher of one well-known type, 'to the inward voice. The more clearly you distinguish within yourself the one impulse which claims to assert authority over the others, the more you will see its claim to your obedience. You will recognize its evident authority. You will accept it as the Voice of God. Obey this Voice: you will find yourself in contact with an inexhaustible Source of guidance and strength and general belief will follow.'

An answer—the same in essence as that of the simpler Evangelist—has been made more systematically by Ritschl, whose influence, though mostly indirect, is still powerful in this country. 'Faith in divine Providence,' he says, 'is the normal tone of Christian feeling.'¹ For Ritschl the Christian is the man who, as a member of the Christian Community, has known the experience of reconciliation with God. Ritschl seeks his proof of God's existence not in a chain of reasoning but in the 'demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' The great Ritschlian proof-text is from St. John—he that willeth to do His will shall know of the doctrine. Obedience brings forgiveness, and forgiveness assurance of God.

Similar in some respects—though his general religious attitude is very different²—is the answer of the Mystic. When he tells us that by withdrawing his mind from all lower things, he has an assured apprehension of God, there is no reason for doubting his testimony. It is confirmed by its resemblance to the general experience of devout men in meditation and

¹ *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, pp. 207, 588, 616, cf Eng. trn, p 652.

² Ritschl, *R. und V.*, p. 107.

prayer. Unreasoned knowledge, of which our belief in the reality of our neighbours is one example, is not necessarily unreasonable.¹

Yet such unreasoned knowledge of God—though a sufficient basis for religion—is for our present purpose inadequate. We want a foundation on which we can both infer the Future Life for ourselves, and justify this belief to others. This foundation unreasoned knowledge cannot supply. Our knowledge of *God* may be immediate: but not even the Mystic can lay claim to an immediate intuition of the *divine ordering of the world*. A contemplative rest in God is consistent with a pessimistic conception of the Universe.

Are we, then, to return to the ‘inferential theology’ of the eighteenth century—to Paley and the Argument from Design?

Many of the objections to the theology of Paley are just: and beyond the more obvious objections there are others.² If God is conceived as the ‘almighty Watchmaker,’ the charm of Nature is destroyed. Every natural thing becomes artificial.

Again, for religion (as observation of religious men will show) God is not simply a knowing and willing Being ‘outside of whom the world process falls.’³ God is not *under* the laws of morality and thought, as One Who merely knows and conforms to them. Still less does He arbitrarily ‘lay them down.’ They are rather part of His nature. He not merely enjoins love: He *is* love. But if He includes within Himself the necessary laws of all kinds which He knows, then He includes within Himself the whole world-process which follows from those laws. If God’s volition was one thing and its fulfilment another—the latter *ex hypothesi* outside Him—we should owe a divided gratitude; to Him for His volition and to the law which connects volition with fulfilment. Such division is alien to the spirit of religion.

¹ v Dr Rashdall’s suggestion that we know other people by an argument from analogy, see Dr Webb’s *Our Knowledge of One Another*, Brit. Acad.

² The most obvious objection is the assumption of the unchangeableness of species.

³ The phrase is Dr Webb’s.

Again, a consummate whole is impaired by *addition*. Think of the case of a consummate work of art. If God, apart from the world, is all-inclusive of good, the world is superfluous. Conversely a God, to Whom the good things of the world are external, is not all-inclusive of good and lacks perfection. Finally 'ends' are not, as Paley assumes, identical with purposes. Facts governed by principles are not necessarily governed by a conscious mind. That 'laws imply a law-giver' is refuted by the simple example of Geometry. If the facts about certain measurements of angles are governed by the principles laid down by Euclid without the intervention of a mind,¹ may not the same thing happen with aesthetic and other apparently purposive principles to which natural facts conform?

There are, in fact, two common mistakes about 'law' in Nature. There is on the one hand this assumption that laws imply a lawgiver. There is on the other hand the belief of the Conceptualist that they exist in our minds only.

But, if his reasoning is at times faulty, Paley's work is still valuable. It calls attention to a significant group of facts: those in which are realized what reason regards as 'ends in themselves'—things of value for their own sake—organic life; beauty; human knowledge: especially knowledge of morality.

If ends are realized otherwise than by accident, this fact throws light on the character of the Universe. If among the laws of the Universe there is even *one* 'teleological law'—that is, a law prescribing the realization of an 'end'—we reasonably ask whether the whole System must not then be teleological.²

Nature is certainly a System in some sense. Its laws are

¹ See e.g. Euclid, I, 32.

² The laws of counterpoint may be regarded as simple statements of fact, i.e. of the procedure of certain composers. Yet in relation to music taken as a whole their teleological significance is obvious. They are concerned with an 'end'—i.e. with beauty.

A similar question arises about the relation of the Idea of the Good to geometrical truth. According to Plato the Idea of the Good is the ground of all truth. It furnishes the objects of knowledge with the truth that is in them. It is the origin both of Science and of Truth (508E). In the intellectual world it dispenses truth and reason (517C).

connected together. They refer to the same group of material particles, and cannot be correctly stated without mutual reference. The law, for example, that the sap rises in spring has reference to the law of gravity. The sap has a definite power to overcome gravity to a certain extent. It overcomes the natural tendency of all matter to fall. Gravity indeed may be called the 'residuary legatee' of all other tendencies. My body can stand erect while life lasts. Afterwards it is gravity which takes charge of its movements.¹

We may admit that a System can contain together laws which are teleological and laws which are not so. The argument for regarding the world as a teleological system is still strong.

CHAPTER VII

THE FAITH WHICH IS THE BASIS OF SCIENCE

IN the first place the realization of certain ends in Nature is too constant and habitual to be accidental. Over and above the familiar examples of 'life'—that is, the organic co-operation of the parts of a body²—and of consciousness, supported by bodily organs, there are other examples less familiar but even clearer.

Consider, first, such colour-schemes as are shown in the landscape, or (on a smaller scale) in a peacock's feather. To produce a good colour-scheme so that the manifold relations among the separate points of colour shall all be satisfactory—is difficult. This is why good pictures fetch high prices.

Is it not, then, quite impossible that the innumerable good colour-schemes of Nature should be accidental—should just stumble into gracefulness and harmony by chance? This question is the ground of what Bishop Gore called the Argument

¹ Cf. Hegel's well-known saying about digestion.

² Darwin (*Origin of Species*, Chap. VIII (near the beginning) and Chap. XV (conclusion)) denies that his theory explains the origin of life.

from Beauty. The beauty of animal and vegetable forms is for many of us one of the most obvious confirmations of any faith we may possess in the rationality of the Universe. These colour-schemes are far from being all equally beautiful. Some landscapes are flat and dull. But Nature left to itself never falls below a certain level of beauty. It never violates the principles of taste as these are repeatedly violated by bad artists and ill-dressed women. But to keep to this level of beauty requires strict 'selection' and 'exclusion' since a very few wrong touches can spoil any colour scheme. Unless, then, this harmony is all accidental there must be some principle—not necessarily applied by a conscious being—which keeps Nature from putting in these wrong touches.¹ But a law which prescribes beauty and harmony is prescribing an 'end.'

Consider, next, the law—on which much of our educational system rests—that if true moral principles are put clearly and persistently before the mind men tend to see their truth. Mankind has made many wrong moral judgments. But even the lowest races so respond to fair treatment as to show that they recognize justice when they see it. Further, our very trust in thinking implies that we believe in a tendency in the mind to recognize truth.

This law, further, is a specimen of a teleological law referring to matter. If thinking tends to truth—and if thought depends (as we find it to do) on the brain²—we have not told the whole truth about this physical organ, unless we mention its general tendency so to work that knowledge of truth is the result.

If we observe our expectations, and especially our denials, and the principles which these imply, we shall find that all through we are assuming the 'rationality' of the Universe in an *implicitly optimistic sense*. The word 'good' is used by Plato in a general—we might say a 'colourless'—sense: of whatever may be morally, aesthetically or otherwise desirable. We

¹ See note at end of chapter.

² There exists what we may call the 'sieve' theory of the brain, viz. that the brain filters the contents of our minds so that only those possible thoughts become actual which are not deleterious. If this theory should ever be established it would not invalidate the argument of the text.

shall find that—if we take ‘good’ in this colourless sense—we do in fact all of us assume the ultimate goodness of the Order of Nature.

‘Why,’ says Mr Aldous Huxley, ‘should we assume that the Universe is perfect, or even that it is rational?’

In the first place every sane man assumes the rationality of the world in some sense, and draws bold conclusions from this faith. As I walk, I trust that the pavement ten yards ahead of me will remain in its present place when I come to it ten seconds hence. This trust is an act of faith. It goes beyond both experience and proof. The firmness of the pavement cannot be mathematically demonstrated: nor can experience show me a single moment of the future. My confidence implies a trust in the *Whole*: at least such trust that I am sure that the part of Nature beyond visible limits will not so interfere with the part near to me as to make my predictions worthless. Indeed my trust in the whole is the strongest part of my trust. An explosion may shake the pavement. It will not shake my trust in the general orderliness of Nature nor in the general correctness of my expectations.

Thus we all make a far-reaching act of faith. What is its nature? We will begin with some negations. It is worth the reader’s while to think through these negations with care.

In the first place this trust in Nature is not simply instinctive. My dog expects the pavement to remain firm: but he does not, as I do, draw conclusions about parts of the Universe distant from him in Space and Time.

Secondly, this trust is not simply a faith in *uniformity*. We need some further principle—at least a rough notion of Nature’s procedure—to show us where to expect uniformity and where not. History repeats itself sometimes but not always.

Nor again, is our trust in the rationality of Nature a mere belief in the law of contradiction. That law goes without saying: but it would not by itself lead us to a single definite expectation.

Nor, fourthly, is our belief in an order of Nature to be identified simply with any purely formal principle, such as the

'permanence of substance' or the 'persistence of force.' None of these formal principles are enough to cover all the confident expectations and denials which we make on the basis of our faith in the rationality of the world. Taken by themselves they would seldom justify *any one* of our everyday certainties. Apart from knowledge of the whole astronomical system, permanence of substance or persistence of thought are not by themselves enough to guarantee to-morrow's sunrise.

Lastly, the 'rational' here does not signify simply that which can be made the subject of a generalization. If we said 'Only that occurs which can be stated in a general form,' this principle would give us no particular guidance. For aught we know to the contrary any fact may be brought within a general statement.

But we can get beyond mere negations. What we *do* mean by 'rationality' in this connection can be seen by our *application* of the principle: if we will take pains to observe what examples of rationality we commonly give, what we affirm as demanded by this principle, what we reject as contrary to it, and also how we argue in certain doubtful cases.

Side by side with the advance in knowledge of natural law goes the rejection of superstition. We reject (even when it violates none of the formal principles just mentioned, nor any known law of Nature) everything which, if it happened, would make the world as a whole 'absurd' or 'grotesque.' We reject without argument many incidents in the *Arabian Nights*. The Gods of Olympus are no more contrary to uniformity than are certain strange and unfamiliar animals. If we say 'I reject these, because I believe the world to conform to a rational *standard*' (and no one who rejected them as 'grotesque' could object to this term) we are not thinking of a standard of logical consistency—fairy tales do not always involve contradiction—but of a standard of rational *approval*. 'Grotesque' is an aesthetic term: a term of value. A world which side by side with the familiar regularities which physicists study, contained these grotesque incidents also, would be 'incongruous.' This again is a term of 'value.' Fairy tales

within themselves may be aesthetically beautiful. But we feel that the events that they allege—though they evolve no logical contradiction—are unfit to co-exist in one whole with the ordered events we know: or perhaps even unfit to exist in any coherent universe. We describe any world which should contain them as incoherent: not in the sense that it must be logically incoherent, but in the same general sense of the word 'incoherent' in which we speak of an *aesthetically* incoherent whole. Similarly we reject such tales and superstitions as 'childish' or 'silly.' 'I cannot,' we say, 'accept pure rubbish.' They are 'childish' because a world in which they were true could satisfy only an immature person's standard of approval. To believe them is 'folly.' But the negative act—the rejection of these absurdities as such—implies the positive belief that the Universe is ordered, not necessarily by a wise personal ruler, but in some sense on principles of wisdom.

In virtue of this belief in the world's rationality, we make many affirmations and denials. 'Winter will return.' 'It is not worth while to procure spells against witchcraft.' Our building up of a conception, becoming gradually defined, of a rationally ordered world is a single intellectual task. We are using confidently a single far-reaching principle. Where we use it as a basis of rejection, then the assertion that a world containing such and such things would be absurd and grotesque, would be our last word on the subject. The fact that such absurdity is the only kind of irrationality we are here concerned to show indicates what is our interpretation of the principle we tacitly treat as ultimate. We are rejecting what is plainly unworthy of rational *approval*: and rejecting it on the sole ground that it is so. But the affirmations are based on the same principle. To affirm a continuing world-order, and to deny a sudden lapse into chaos, are only two sides of the same mental act.

The same principle is implied in cases where some doubt is possible. Take the alleged miracle of Joshua at Ajalon. The song from which the whole story presumably arises need mean nothing more than that before sunset and moonrise the victory was complete. But the prose account implies a miracle

such as the modern world rejects with indignation. Yet if some theologian argued in its favour that no one can disprove the doctrine that matter and its powers exist solely by the will of God, that God may delay natural processes and then set them going again as if nothing had happened, that on the issue of this battle with the Amorites the future of mankind depended, no less than on the result of Marathon or Salamis, that therefore the principle

Nec Deus interst in dignus vindice nodus

is not violated by the miracle, and so forth, this reasoning would not convince us, but it would reasonably turn the edge both of our indignation and our ridicule. We should feel ourselves in contact with a violent theory, but not with a grovelling superstition. The mere admission of *degrees* of the kind of evident irrationality which leads us to deny credibility shows the nature of the general principle we are using. Again, if a mention of the realization of an adequate end by the natural disturbance involved is admitted as relevant, or even plausible, in this argument we are tacitly recognizing that our belief in the world's rationality is a 'judgment of value.'

In realizing 'ends' such as beauty of colour and correct moral knowledge, and also in its uniformity, Nature is conforming *pro tanto* to our Ideal for Nature. Is this conformity accidental? Apart from the argument that the conformities are too numerous to be due to chance, it is plain that we do not behave as if we thought them accidental.

Sir James Jeans¹ approves the suggestion that 'six monkeys, set to strum unintelligently on type-writers for millions and millions of years, would be bound in time to write all the books in the British Museum.' Amid their work 'we might be sure of finding a Shakespeare sonnet somewhere.' But, surely, if all is left to chance, we cannot thus argue that every variety of word will occur somewhere. Among the infinite number of possible Universes, there are all the many Universes which include other events but no Shakespeare sonnet. If everything had been left to chance, the Universe might have

¹ *The Mysterious Universe*, p. 3.

been just *anything*. It might have contained just one event, and all the rest emptiness: and that event might be any one of the infinite number of possibilities. On such a theory we could not reasonably make any prediction. The actual Universe might (on this hypothesis of chance) be one which follows the present order of Nature up till some date in 1950, and then lapses into nothingness, or goes off into any conceivable series of events which the most whimsical imagination can suggest. On Sir James's hypothesis we could have no good ground for any particular expectation. The fact that we form many expectations with confidence shows that we do not accept Sir James's reasoning. The artist who advises his pupils to study Nature is in fact prophesying. He assumes the law that Nature will continue to conform to principles of beauty, and that thus the budding painter may learn these principles.

This whole argument is one of which it is singularly easy to miss the point. Someone may say, 'It is not by any general principle that we form our expectations. We always have in mind a *particular* pattern or plan of the world which Nature seems to be fulfilling. We *may* conceive this purposively. If we *do*, then in constructing our conception of the world in the parts yet unknown to us we proceed as the art critic does who 'reconstructs' the lost parts of the Venus de Milo or as J. Ries did in finishing an unfinished Sonata of Beethoven.'

The answer to this reasoning is that in fact we have no such single plan in mind. We often hesitate, as we saw, between vastly different conceptions of the whole: chiefly nowadays between the Materialist Ideal of a world sublimely uniform and sublimely heedless of human concerns, and on the other hand the Christian conception in which moral interests are predominantly important. As our standards of approval change, so our beliefs about the facts of the Universe change with them.

Again, it may be said that our expectations are mostly conclusions from particular facts: that the only thing general about them is a vague expectation of orderliness in Nature: that we expect that what occurs will fall under general rules,

or, perhaps, will conform to some rational standard. Against such an argument it is enough to reply that such pure generalities would give no guidance at all. To say 'only that which can be brought under a rule'—only the 'generalizable'—will happen would exclude nothing. Anything may fall under *some* rule, or conform to *some* standard. But, as we saw, when we are perfectly clear that an alleged event could form part of no rational Universe, we reject it out of hand. We are using here the quite universal principle that absurdities cannot happen.

When we have once seen, as we saw just now, that in our predictions we are using a standard of *value*—of *approval*—it is clear that we assume that we are dealing with genuine value, with wise approval. We should not call a world reasonable because it conformed to a false standard. We imply a standard which is correct. But *a* correct standard is *the* correct standard. Two standards contradicting one another in what they pronounce good cannot both be true. Indeed, in the end (as we come better and better to grasp the details of our Ideal) we shall find that only one of all the possible Universes which we can conceive would be wholly satisfactory to our reason.

Again, it might be argued that our expectations depend on our direct sense of probability, and not on any standard of rational approval at all. But it is surely obvious that we predict 'mediately': that is, that we give a reason for each expectation. We have been examining these reasons, and the general principles involved. To say that our general principle is probability is to commit ourselves to the circular statement that we think something likely to happen because it is likely to happen.

If we have seen our way through these misunderstandings and are clear about the meaning and implication of our trust in the rationality of the world, we shall then see how particular laws throw light upon the whole. 'A world,' says Prof. Webb, 'which can produce a hunger and thirst after righteousness, and yet nowhere contain the means of satisfying them, is a world fundamentally incoherent and irrational.'¹

¹ *God and Personality*, (Gifford Lectures) p. 189.

If the world, through the human brain, provides elaborate machinery for producing knowledge of the good and yet is evil, or indifferent to good, in its constitution as a whole, it is not a rationally ordered world. A system prescribing all this amount of good, but indifferent to good in its aims in general, is not a system which we could trust. Nor is it the system which anyone, believer or unbeliever, has in mind. Many people ignore all teleological laws: but no one thinks seriously of a mongrel system like this. We could not get sufficiently 'inside' such a world plan as to know beforehand what it might or might not produce.

Thus, the argument has two stages. First, we are agreed in holding that the world conforms to a rational standard. Secondly, we work out the consequences of this belief by reference to the particular standards which we adopt.

It is only by misunderstanding that we can fail to perceive the general agreement of mankind at the first stage. At the second stage there are of course very great differences. But even these are not necessarily irreducible, or beyond the reach of argument. Our different conceptions of what a rational Universe would contain depend partly upon the facts which we have studied. The physicist sees that it must contain conformity to law and is perhaps concerned about nothing else. The moralist or historian sees the prominence of moral issues in the part of the world which experience has shown him. Thus fulfilment of moral interests forms part of his standard for the whole.

Thus even fundamentally opposite conceptions are based on the same fundamental faith that for the Universe and everything in it a good and sufficient reason can be given. A good reason may be given (as we shall see) for the occurrence of much that, seen by itself—seen in isolation—is evil. But no good reason can be given for any departure of the Whole at any point from that which it is best that the whole should be. In this sense the world is not only 'rational'—to quote Mr Aldous Huxley's antithesis—but also 'perfect.'

'So purely general—so colourless—an optimism,' it may

be said, 'leaves both God and the Future Life open questions.' For one who, like Swinburne, thought God 'the supreme evil,' and saw no good to be attained by life after death, such general optimism would lead to denial of the Future Life and to Atheism. But if to this general optimism we join the particular judgments of value which most of us at heart acknowledge—for example, that high estimate of the value of human personality which is the basis in western countries both of our Law and of our Philanthropy—we shall have a basis for a good many conclusions.

These conclusions will be drawn out in the following pages. But first we must meet certain obvious objections to the argument as a whole.

CHAPTER VIII

EVIL

THE most obvious objection of all is the existence of Evil. Evils, overwhelming in quantity and virulent in quality, are present in the world. Here is a problem which admits of no facile treatment.

The problem is popularly said to be insoluble. What is meant by this saying is generally that we cannot explain in detail exactly why each particular misfortune or vexation is necessary to God's plan. This is true, but in no way surprising. The plans of a general or statesman may be in large measure mysterious even to his friends.

The philosopher cannot be satisfied to dismiss any problem as insoluble. Moreover Christianity offers in principle a solution which seems sufficient. Man is appointed for victory: and there can be no victory without evil to be conquered. A world would not be perfect if it contained no patience and no courage. But there can be no patience without pain: and no courage without danger. Thus the existence of such evils as pain and danger are justified. They are necessary to the perfection of the Universe.

It is often admitted that this justification is sound. But a further question is raised. Why is there so *much* evil? An answer is to be found in Prof. Bosanquet's profound remark that we should not be satisfied with a world which contained just enough evil to make us feel good.¹ The more this saying is pondered, the more its truth will be seen. Human dignity would not be attained by the moderate courage and patience required to meet the obstacles of an obstacle race. It is in the struggle with overwhelming evil—with evil that nearly drives us to despair—that the highest human heroism is developed. To meet this problem thus in a few short sentences may give the air of a facile solution. But if the reader will reflect upon what is involved in this lifelong struggle with evils over which we very seldom in this life have the impression of gaining complete mastery—if he will think of living with the problem of evil instead of merely talking about it—he will see that there is at least nothing facile in what is here offered.

'The most puzzling of evils,' some will say, 'is the persistent waste in Nature: the countless seeds that die, the light that the sun pours uselessly into space.' This, surely, is a thoroughly Philistine objection. A great part of the charm of the world is its fecundity. Lavish fertility is in itself a good. It is surely only a lack of aesthetic perception which can prevent our seeing this charm. And is not the man equally a Philistine who can only regard this blaze of glory in the heavens under the commercial category of waste? The Psalmist who pictures God as finding His pastime in the antics of Leviathan might well think of the sun as pouring forth its light for its Maker's pleasure.

Another objection will certainly be raised. If evil is necessary to victory, can heaven be without evil? Can we even wish for a state where there is no evil? Must we not conceive a Heaven free of evil as a life of degeneration?

The answer is suggested in the *Book of the Revelation*. The saints in glory are there described as remembering their tribulations and their sins. Their rejoicing lies just in this, that they

¹ *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 25.

are washed from sin. Thus Heaven is here presented as the perpetuation of the moment of victory. A victor is not degraded in his moment of triumph, although the foe is now fully overcome. He may now be maintaining the very same attitude of will—the very same heroism—which won him the victory: and this not merely in the hypothetical form that he is willing to go on resisting if anything should remain to be resisted. Such hypothetical loyalty would be otiose. But the same act of choice which made us loyal on earth may continue to affect our activity in heaven. There is no need to assume that in Heaven all victory will be past and no further service required. It has been said that the best of God's promises is that in Heaven His servants shall serve Him. If the Christian must live and die a penitent, must he not be equally a penitent for all eternity? Endless repudiation of the evil choices of the past need not be idle if joined with active loyalty in the present.

But are not the past evils a standing blemish upon the world? No one would wish to forget these evils which are the cause of victory and the necessary condition of redemption: but must they not mar the world's perfection?

The best hint for the solution of this serious difficulty is given in impassioned language in Scripture. The metaphors of washing, of purification, of cleansing by fire, and so forth are there very frequent. This conception of cleansing is really required by the very notion of sin as defilement. If we feel that our sins have not only brought guilt upon us, but also defilement, we shall feel that this defilement cries out for some kind of cleansing. Nothing can alter the fact that the sin was done. *Es war*—it is part of the undying past. But the cleansing implies that, though it remains a fact of history, its offensiveness can somehow be done away by some supervening event.

Conceptions of this sort are plainer to some minds than to others. They are linked with emotions which are perhaps less strong in the modern than in the ancient mind. But Isaiah's pleasure in the 'blast of burning' which shall cleanse away the

filth of Jerusalem, is not quite unintelligible to the modern reader. Most of us, probably, if we had been oppressed by the presence of loathsome and insanitary dwellings, would experience a distinct emotional satisfaction if these were destroyed by fire—distinct from what we should feel at the removal of the uncleanness by the work of the mason. It is hard to say how many people would feel this distinction acutely: but it is very closely connected with the fact that we loathe uncleanness directly apart from its danger to health.

A more familiar example of this same general conception—the removal of the offensiveness of an act by some subsequent occurrence—is found in the case of punishment and vengeance. Schopenhauer speaks—without approval—of the common juristic conception that in punishment a wrong is ‘atoned for’ and ‘neutralized’ (*gesubnt: neutralisiert*).¹

Here, then, are two connected notions, defilement and cleansing. The latter falls under the still more general notion of the neutralization of the offensiveness of one event by another.

These are distinct conceptions—defilement is distinct from guilt, cleansing from pardon—in the minds of those who have strongly felt that they are *stained* by sin, and have strongly desired to be rid of this stain. There is always a certain intellectual clearness in anything that is emotionally strong.² It is worth while reflecting upon Dr Bosanquet’s opinion that modern thought tends to give a higher rank than was given formerly to certain primitive and indestructible instincts and emotions.

The relevance of all this to the present problem is clear. For a complete solution of the Problem of Evil—that is, for the full reconciliation of the evident facts of evil with an optimistic faith—we need not only, first, to justify initially each evil thing as a necessary condition of complete victory—so that

¹ Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Verstellung*, par 62

² The notion that blood has a cleansing power is particularly difficult to many modern minds. It was understood, however, by Aeschylus (*Seven against Thebes*, 275, cf. Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*, 137). Here we are concerned with the general conception only, of which these special purifications are examples. See my essay in *Atonement in History and in Life*, p 297

the world would not be perfect without it: but also, secondly, to show that the unquestionably evil character of some of the occurrences in history do not necessarily leave such a blemish on the world that, regarded as a Whole, it cannot satisfy our reason.

If we once see that this notion of the neutralization of the offensiveness of an event by some other event is not unmeaning, it will follow that this neutralization must be conceived as taking place either by means of some mental event, or by some material event, or by some combination of the two: for there is no known or possible fact outside these two classes. To see just *what* would be the adequate neutralization of any given evil requires an apprehension closely akin to aesthetic insight. But there is nothing incredible in the supposition that if we could know all that happened in respect to physical events and mental emotion, on Calvary and in the subsequent martyrdoms and heroism of those who may have 'filled up what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ'¹—and, knowing this, we could make all the appropriate emotional reactions—we might feel that all the evils of the world were neutralized for us.

But such satisfaction, if it is possible, is for the future. We are merely concerned here with a general conception, which has got itself expressed in great literature, Pagan, Jewish, and Christian. The place in literature of these conceptions of purification, though they are uncongenial to us, should lead the reader not to dismiss the present argument without reflection. There is nothing unreasonable in the faith that the God Who has put into the human mind a desire for such purification may fulfil this desire to the full. In the light of this general conception the grossest sins and evils are not an insuperable objection to an optimistic conception of the Universe.

¹ Cor 1, 24 (R V.).

CHAPTER IX

FREE WILL

HERE arises a further—perhaps a harder—question. Is such a faith as that to which the argument has led us consistent with the recognition of human freedom? Is a thoroughgoing Optimism—whether held in a theistic,¹ or in an impersonal,² form—consistent with our sense that we are responsible for our actions? On the reality of moral responsibility pretty general agreement may be assumed.

A consistent Optimism involves the belief that all occurrences are necessitated. Events must so happen that the world as a whole shall embody the Whole Good.

Plato, perhaps, is not always consistent with himself. But, in contrast with popular materialism—which leaves us with unexplained atoms—and with popular Theism—which leaves us with an unexplained God—he suggests the theory which bases the world on secure foundations. We are familiar with the notion of truths and facts which follow from general Ideas. The facts of Geometry—the measurements, for example, of angles and triangles—can be shown to follow from such Ideas as ‘triangle,’ ‘line,’ ‘straightness,’ and the rest. It is true, as Kant insists, that we discover this necessary sequence by means of ‘intuition’—by presenting to ourselves a *picture* of these spatial facts. But this need for intuition does not alter the truth that the propositions stated by Euclid follow from the general Ideas which they involve. The Ideas—or (if we prefer it) the *truth* that these ideas have meaning, and are forms which existence can take—are clearly self-dependent: independent of our knowledge. The axioms, for example, are self-dependent. The Ideas involved in them are therefore

¹ *Timaeus*, 30, B, line 5.

² *Republic*, 517C.

self-dependent too. If then (as Plato hints)¹ it is the same with the world in general—if, just as geometrical truths follow from such Ideas as 'line' and 'triangle,' so the world and its contents follow from Ideas, especially from the Idea of the Good—then complete explanation is not in principle impossible: though, except in a few cases, we have not the least glimmering of a notion where an ultimate explanation is to be looked for. Thus the demon of infinite regress is exorcised.

Popular thought is seriously troubled by the notion of infinite regress. This is expressed in the Indian myth that the world rests on an elephant: that the elephant rests on a tortoise: and so on.² Belief in the possible derivation of all truths from Ideas would alone deliver us from this quagmire of non-finality. It is with one class of truths alone, those of the pure sciences, that we can *show*, or clearly *see*, this foundation in ideas. Mathematics shows us the type of perfect explanation. We see *how* the truth follows from the Ideas. Elsewhere we do not see this. But we need not therefore conclude that other truths may *not* have a similar foundation, which we could see if we had sufficient knowledge.³ Do we not in practice assume that they have such foundation? Any faith in an Order of Nature implies that Nature is a necessary system. We are as sure that unsupported stones *must* fall as that equilateral triangles must be equiangular, though we do not 'see into' the necessity of the former truth as we do of the latter.

Kant speaks of 'intelligible necessity' (*verständliche Notwendigkeit*)—of that which is 'necessary by its very conception' (*aus seinem Begriffe notwendig ist*).⁴ But is not *all* necessity intelligible necessity? For if, for some fact, there is no reason which anyone *could possibly see*, there is no reason at all: and if there is no reason why it should be, why call it necessary? If it can quite well be thought otherwise, then it might *be* other-

¹ *Republic*, 517C

² Locke, *Essay*, Book II

³ Observe the cases where *a priori* truths were divined or guessed at, or seen to be true in observed cases, before they were proved. A man might have measured so many triangles that he could draw empirically the conclusion in Euclid, Book I, prop. 32.

⁴ *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, pp 280, 640, 641.

wise. To say 'This must be,' is to say *more* than 'This is.' What is *added*? Surely the difference is that 'what must be' is 'what must be thought so and cannot be thought otherwise.' Let us say that it is what cannot be thought otherwise without open or hidden contradiction. In the case of the pure sciences the contradiction is open: elsewhere it is hidden.

Does not our method of *showing* necessity reveal what necessity means? We demonstrate necessity, where we *can* demonstrate it, by showing all the links in a chain of sequence. We show the contradiction involved in denying it. We start from Ideas. From their very nature the truth we demonstrate follows. The demonstration is complete when every link in the sequence is shown. Now if in some case it should happen not merely that I do not see all the links, but that one link is really missing—that there is no sequence which anyone *could* show—then surely the chain is worthless. If I say 'I see no reason why unsupported stones should fall,' that is nothing. But if I say 'There *is* no reason—no reason in the world—why they should fall,' why expect them to do so? To say this is to deny the necessity of gravitation.

To sum up, if there is no sufficient reason why an event should occur, then there is no necessity. But if there is a sufficient 'reason why,' then the necessity is in its nature intelligible, however little I understand it.

A reason for thinking it so involves the reason for its being so. To deny this, is to set thought against itself. If you admit that there is no contradiction in denying a statement, this admits that it may conceivably be false. It sets thought at discord with itself to say 'Yet it is a necessary truth.' If there is nothing against *thinking* it otherwise, then there is nothing against it *being* otherwise. It is then not necessary, but contingent. Again, if events do not follow from Ideas, how can they be explained by Ideas? Explanation—so far as it goes in each case—is just the work of showing this sequence. To explain a thing is to show the reason why it should be.

Faith, then, in the ultimate explicability of the Universe

and of everything in it¹—and it is our habit to seek an explanation for everything—implies that everything is ‘intelligibly necessary.’ *Optimistic* faith—whether theistic or not—implies that everything is necessary which is demanded by the Idea of the *Good*—the true ideal of what the Universe ought to be. This true ideal demands its own complete fulfilment, without departure from it at any one point. To the true ideal nothing can be indifferent. The various ends which reason discovers demand each of them due recognition. The true balancing of all these ends leaves—as in a consummate work of art—no room for any divergence. There can be only one series of events in which the Whole Good can be realized.

In a Universe, then, in which everything is thus necessitated, are men deprived of moral responsibility? It will be a serious obstacle to the reception of the argument of the preceding chapters, if it is found to be inconsistent with patent facts of our moral life.

The Libertarian has, at first sight, a strong case. He is clearly right in distinguishing between behaviour in which we are passive—as when I cannot help sneezing (or laughing) at a wrong moment—and behaviour in which we are active. He is right in recognizing that the more deliberate a wrong

¹ The person who knows the Idea of the Good will—according to Plato (*Rep.*, 506A)—know the connection between goodness and the special things that are good, justice, beauty, etc. He will know *how* they are good. Is there any reason in the nature of things why I should not come to see this connection between goodness and these good things (or, again, between goodness and its realization) quite as clearly as I see the connection between equiangularity and equilaterality in a triangle? Such a *visio boni* might stir my soul to its depths.

We are merely concerned here to analyse the character and conditions of a knowledge that should be complete. But is there any reason why such knowledge, besides stirring emotion, should not have emotion as part of itself, just as our present less clear knowledge by which we divine such connections has emotion as part of itself? e.g., we divine aesthetic truths through aesthetic sensitiveness.

It has been suggested that the world is not explicable as a whole but only particular elements through their relation with the whole. Plato hopes for the explanation of all realities through ideas. When he makes the Idea of the Good beyond and superior to real existence (*ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας*, 509B) is he not just implying the explicability of all real facts by this ideal which is distinct from them? To deny the explicability of the Whole can only end logically in total scepticism. If any part of the chain lacks necessity, the whole chain is worthless.

act is, the greater is its guilt. This—he says truly—implies that my act is due to my own choice.

Again, he is right in saying that our deliberations are commonly the real causes of future events. Thinking is as truly a cause of events as are our passions or our movements. The mind is sometimes a passive spectator of events, but not always.

'It is certain,' says Prof. Taylor,¹ 'that there is a pattern of the whole, and that it will not be violated.' On such a theory—it has been said—and on any theory which alleges that all human behaviour follows from the ultimate constitution of the Universe, there is no freedom. Indeed, on such a theory it cannot be truly said that man 'acts' at all.²

Is this true? Let us notice that our distinction between the states of mind in which we are passive, and those in which we are active, is quite independent of any theory about how these states are caused. We know these states from within—from observation of ourselves. If, looking back upon my past, I see that an act was mine, that I chose quite deliberately to do a deed which I well knew was base, I have here every ground for self-condemnation and self-contempt. No theory of the ultimate causation of the act is needed for this condemnation. No theory of its causation can reverse the condemnation or mitigate it. I, the conscious being who made this decision—I who chose between two courses and took the wrong one—am in the fullest measure responsible. My responsibility is not diminished by showing that someone, or something, else is responsible for me. The internal character of an act of deliberate choice gives sufficient ground for the blame or praise. If God is responsible for me—it is He that has made us and not we ourselves—He must take the responsibility. As we have just seen,³ He may have good reason for producing evil. On any theory, He is responsible for temptations to evil, for my original proneness to evil, for my ignorance, and for other

¹ *Faith of a Moralist*, Vol II, p. 421

² I owe this statement of the Libertarian argument to my friend Canon Leonard Hodgson

³ Ch VIII.

evil things. But none of the possible questions about God's responsibility have any bearing upon a just judgment of my act as it is in itself. If I deliberately did what I knew to be wrong, I deserve blame. The I who judges is the I who sinned. This moral judgment is independent of any theory of causation. I am what I am: and I did what I did: whether I am a creature of God or a product of blind natural forces.¹

Is there, then, any plausibility in saying that a being created by God so as to act in a certain way—for example, a man whose fidelity can be counted on—is not 'acting' when he exhibits this fidelity? Can God create a loyal soul? If He can, why say that the loyal soul is not 'acting' when he exhibits this loyalty?

Further, the Libertarian himself has some difficult questions to answer. *Where*, in the chain of causation, does the broken link occur?² Take a simple case. I offer a man a glass of port, which he knows is bad for him. But if the temptation is serious, and if also there is real contingency, so that his decision might go either way, then something which (on the Libertarian theory) will be the determinant of his choice, must happen between my offer and his acceptance or refusal. If he is to have free will, what happens must be something *in him*. The opportunity, the inclination, the knowledge, are all of them fixed points. What is the uncertain element?

Again, does not the sting of my remorse lie in the very fact that the wrong act shows what I am (in the broad sense), and thus *proceeds* from what I am? If it had been intruded into my life from outside it would not thus reveal me to myself: and there would not be the same remorse.

Thus, if someone says to the Christian determinist that his

¹ It is asked, 'Would you not mitigate your condemnation if you learned that a criminal was under the influence of a drug not voluntarily taken?' Here one might rightly doubt whether one knew enough of his state of mind to judge him. If one found oneself in an evil frame of mind which could be traced to some drug unintentionally taken, the physical cause would be a partial excuse. After this explanation, I should not accuse myself of some long standing carelessness in the spiritual life, which otherwise might have been the natural explanation.

² I once asked Bishop Gore the question in the text. His answer was, 'In one sense there is no broken link for the whole process is continuous.' This answer seemed to me more in accordance with my theory than with his own.

penitence is illogical—‘Why be so penitent for what you could not help?’—the determinist can justly answer, ‘I know what I deliberately did. I know what my self-will was. I have in that sheer knowledge ample ground for penitence.’

The Libertarian’s error is that he asks, not ‘Who is responsible?’ but ‘Was the act inevitable?’ To say, ‘I could not help it,’ is a good excuse if you mean ‘It was forced upon me from without.’ But here my own choice was the cause. The inevitableness—the direct sequence of the deed from what I was—does not make it any better. It merely shows how bad I had become.

Again, is anyone so consistently Libertarian as to argue that if our service of God is free, we might at any moment refuse it: that its freedom consists just in our power to withdraw it: that therefore for all eternity the saints in glory are free to startle us at any moment by rebellion? Libertarianism is seldom carried out so consistently. Do we not, then, in fact assume that full knowledge of the true worth of the Good makes evil choice impossible: that no one can prefer to the true good what he knows to be comparatively worthless trash? If this is true, God, knowing at each point what will be our exact degree of clearness of mind, and knowing also the exact strength of the temptation which confuses the mind by representing evil things as good—as, in St Thomas’s phrase, *aliquod bonum ad nunc agendum*—may predict exactly every stage in the struggle. But if I am guided by my knowledge of good, my action is none the less voluntary. St Thomas argues¹ that God by moving our wills (which are voluntary causes) does not prevent their actions being voluntary, but rather makes them voluntary. On this theory God moves the will by showing us the truth. Thus fixedness in good character is not due to mere habit. It is due to clear knowledge.

The reply to the objection that determinism is inconsistent with moral responsibility is thus in essence simple. Our moral judgments upon our actions are dependent on our knowledge of their internal character. No theory of their ultimate causation can alter or modify that judgment. They stand or fall by

¹ *Sum Theol.*, I, lxxxiii, 1 ad 3m.

what they themselves are. The act follows from the preceding deliberations. The character of the deliberations follows from what a man is. Hence the moral responsibility. There is no meaning in the retort that a deliberate act cannot be caused. The category of Cause can be applied to any event. But the retort is also, as the above argument shows, irrelevant.

CHAPTER X

SURVIVAL OF DEATH

IF by this, or by some other, course of reasoning, we have arrived at a theistic, or optimistic, faith, what follows from such faith?

The connection between optimistic faith of a general kind and a belief in God we have already considered. If to a general optimism we add a particular standard of values—namely, the Christian standard which attributes supreme value to personality—our Optimism will become Theism.

If our faith takes this theistic form, certain special arguments may be based upon it. So long as in these special cases we see clearly that it is from *theistic* Optimism, and not from Optimism as such, that these arguments arise—so long, therefore, as we take no unfair advantage of the reader whose Optimism expresses itself in a non-theistic form—there is no reason why we should not discuss side by side two questions: ‘What must a world contain if it is to satisfy the demands of a rational ideal?’ and ‘What sort of a world would a God create who was at once omnipotent and good?’ It is worth while to allow ourselves the greater clearness which the normal theistic language gives.

The special questions about the nature and contents of the Universe which concern us here are familiar. Will there be any Future Life at all? Does any human being survive the death of the body? If some men survive death, is there reason for expecting a Future Life for all? If such a life occurs, can

we be confident that it will last for ever? If there is a Future Life for the soul, does the body in any sense share in it? Can we reasonably form any definite expectations about what such a Future Life would be like? Which of the functions of our earthly life can we reasonably expect to retain in heaven? Can we expect an ultimate moral victory, and consequent happiness, for every individual human being? Or are we to expect a Future Life for some men only—what has been called a conditional immortality? Again, is there in any sense an 'Intermediate state': that is either a state of life intervening, between death and the resurrection, or between death and our final state of triumph?

First of all, then, have we seen any ground for belief in a Future Life at all? In spite of our just and growing respect for Indian thought it is still true that for the educated European the choice lies mainly between some form of the Christian hope and a total denial of all life after death. But it is best to face the question first in its most general form.

The Christian standard of values is not universally accepted. Hegel's doctrine of the 'Infinite value of subjectivity'—that is of conscious human life—which he holds to be characteristic of Christianity, seems to some thinkers a sentimental superstition. Still, in spite of differences, there is a great measure of agreement. A sense of a high value of personality is not merely Christian. It dominates most of the feeling and opinion of the modern world. In the western countries—as we saw—it is the basis both of our Law and of our Philanthropy.

It seems equally clear—though not often remarked upon—that moral conviction involves implicitly a theory of what the Universe ought to be. If kindness is a duty, it is good that the Universe should contain happiness. For why are we bound to promote a thing, unless it is good that that thing should exist? If we are right in removing injustices and inequalities, this must be because they are a blemish on the Universe. And so forth. We shall find, then, that we can discuss the question before us with a considerable background of agreed judgments.

In regard to the Future Life in general, the most obvious *prima facie* conclusion from observed facts is that human life ends at death, since there appears to be no direct evidence of its continuance.¹ But how does this conclusion stand to any thought-out belief in the rationality of the Universe?

Certain things at least are clear. If there is no Future Life, evil—of which the only rational justification could be that it exists to be conquered—will be conquered very imperfectly. A 'God' limited by limitations imposed on Him from without might be entirely justified in creating evils which would give rise to the highest flights of endurance and heroism, but which, because of these limitations, He could not follow up with complete triumph for anyone. Life would then be a tale of partial victory, of heroic defeat. But the conception of God thus limited is not the sort of Theism to which our arguments have brought us. Our faith rests on the perception that the agreement of the Universe with our standard of what is good is too close to be accidental. This conviction, if it expresses itself in Theistic language, takes the form of belief in a God absolutely limited by His own goodness but by nothing else: a God who can do nothing but that which in each set of circumstances is the very best. If God may be hampered in fulfilling the behests of His own goodness, every good thing in the world is *qua* good a pure accident, for there can be no reason why hampered at one point He should not be hampered at another. By admitting that God might be limited by external and non-moral limitations, we should be cutting away the whole foundation on which we build our rational belief in God. If evil, then, is imperfectly conquered, this imperfect conquest is a blemish on the Universe, something with which a good God could not be satisfied, something which a God who is both good and omnipotent will not allow.

Few things in modern literature are more impressive than the treatment of Evil by the late Prof. Bosanquet. 'We expect the world,' he says, 'to be rather the birthplace and theatre, or more—the including totality—of goodness, than itself of the precise nature of what we primarily call good. Its excellency

¹ See Ch V.

is rather to be great in its possibilities, beyond the reaches of the finite soul, so that this may always find more than it can master: may always find more than scope for its utmost effort and its utmost worship.'¹ No Universe, he thinks, could satisfy us except a Universe in which we struggle with evil on a great scale.

Here, then, it may be said, you must take your choice. You may regard evil simply as evil, and look forward to deliverance in Heaven from 'this present evil world.'² Or you may, with Dr Bosanquet, think of evil as justifying itself in this world because of the heroic attitude which could not exist without it. If you hold the latter opinion the argument for a Future Life falls to the ground, as Prof. Bosanquet thinks.

Clearly, however, the alternative is wrongly stated. Evil justifies itself in part in this present world by the heroism of which it is a necessary condition: but in part only. If there is no Future Life, the world is 'great in its possibilities,' but yet not great enough to be a scheme wholly satisfactory to the reason of the moral man. The victory of reason and morality is but imperfectly achieved.

Consider the many men and women whose opportunities of moral development have been less than Dr Bosanquet's. His doctrine has been called 'an opulent man's philosophy.' He was opulent, indeed, in no merely materialistic sense: rich in opportunities, of which he made great use, of culture and social service. Such a life justifies itself, in a great measure, within its own limits. Yet, is it clear that even Dr Bosanquet worked out all that was in him so fully that a good God would feel no remorse in throwing him on the scrap heap, or that the Universe would suffer no loss by his annihilation?

But the defects of a world in which all men's careers end at death is more conspicuous in the cases of moral failure. A tragedy like that of Calvary may justify itself, so far as its Central Figure is concerned, by its inherent nobility. But what of a Judas Iscariot, or an Impenitent Thief? What even of a Penitent Thief? Do their careers justify themselves within earthly limits?

¹ *Ind and Val.*, p. 25.

² Gal. 1, 4

The case is clearest with those who 'never had a chance.' Every human being has in some sense the capacity for morality. Every human being who reaches maturity has known moral aspiration, even if in no more amiable form than the desire for justice to himself. But many people have never had enough mental clearness, or come under good enough influences, to enable their moral capacity to get beyond the most rudimentary stage. Some have no chance of rising above misery and vice. Aristotle believed that the world was no 'series of disconnected episodes like a bad tragedy.' A Universe that is to satisfy our reason must satisfy aesthetic canons as well as moral ones. It must therefore have the aesthetic unity of which Aristotle thus speaks. If human life always ends at death, the world lacks this unity. It is like a work of art in which multitudinous new themes are started but never worked out—never 'ordered together to one end.'¹ In the special cases we are considering the most important aspiration which has ever crossed these unformed minds, that which has the highest intrinsic claim to development, is just taken up and cast aside. If this life is the whole, such men seem indeed to have been 'made for nought.'

But it is not in special cases only that the incompleteness of a Universe which contains no life but this present one is to be seen. The best men strive for courage, for truthfulness in word and thought, for purity, and other virtues. But no one fully attains these virtues in this world. In these and other ways we all store up capacities for activity and for pleasure. The artist 'by self-denial of delight wins higher delight.' If we are right in making these efforts, is it no blemish on the Universe if they come to nothing: if we are destroyed just before, or just after, the goal is attained: if the capacities gained are never to be used?

'Such arguments,' it may be said, 'are mere rhetoric.' But rhetoric is quite in place in stirring those feelings which quicken our perception of *values*. The reader who objects that we are not concerned here with values, that there is no reason for regarding the universe as realizing aesthetic or moral standards must be referred back to a preceding chapter.

¹ Aristotle, *Met.*, 1090 b 20, cf. 1076 a 2, and the whole chapter. See also 1075 a 19.

Another objection may present itself. Tragedy—it is sometimes said¹—is the noblest form of art. Why, then, should we not be satisfied to conceive the Universe as a tragedy? Similarly, Prof. Huxley suggested that, if we could ignore human pain, the orderliness of the Universe—the succession of each phase upon the preceding phase in accordance with inexorable law—would, by its sheer sublimity, fill us with the *amor intellectualis Dei*.

To judge these suggestions we must make up our mind about the importance both of morality and happiness. Would the wise man in judging the Universe ignore human suffering altogether? Even Mr Bradley,² who insists that ‘mere quantity has nothing to do with perfection,’ admits that the *proportion* of pleasure to pain is relevant to our judgment of the Universe. ‘If there is more pain than pleasure in the Universe,’ he says, ‘I at least could not call the Universe perfect.’ Thus Mr Bradley does not regard human suffering as negligible in this connection: and if pain is in itself an evil, we shall judge that evil has not been fully overcome till pain is justified not only by the heroism with which it is borne, but also in the relief and happiness which succeed it.

There are those who say that to demand a happy ending for the Universe is a piece of bad taste comparable to that of Nahum Tate who prepared for the stage a happy ending to *King Lear*, in which the king and Kent ‘retired to private life,’ and Cordelia closed her career with ‘victory and felicity.’³ But a tragedy like *Lear* does not profess to deal with the whole of human existence.⁴ When the tragedians themselves deal in a drama with what is virtually the story of the Universe, they give us what has been called a Drama of Reconciliation. Whereas the first part of *Faust* closes in pure gloom, the second part ends in triumph. Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*, which closes with a cry of wrong, was followed by the lost play *Prometheus Set Free*, which—as we may conclude from

¹ *Ind. and Val.*, p. 18 note, reference to Mr Russell’s *Free Man’s Worship*

² *Ap. and Real*, 6th imp., p. 609

³ Johnson’s *Shakespeare*,

⁴ See Aristotle’s *Poetics*. In judging tragedy it is legitimate to shut one’s eyes to some aspects even of the events which it deals with.

its name and from one well-known reference¹—tells of liberation and the requital of his sufferings.

We have, in fact, if we apply aesthetic categories to the Universe, to face this question as a question of taste pure and simple. A Universe which is to be, in Mr Bradley's phrase and St Thomas's, 'perfect,' must fulfil together all the interests of reason. For those who acknowledge the claims both of morality and of aesthetic completeness, there are difficulties enough in framing a conception of the Universe which shall meet these claims in full, even if we accept the hope of a life after death. But the task, which is *difficult* if we accept this hope, seems *impossible* (for those who admit the supreme claims of morality) without it. It should be noticed therefore that the man who thinks it better, on aesthetic grounds, that the world should end in tragedy and every human career be closed at death, is forming an aesthetic judgment which runs counter to common morality, since morality bids us treat human interests with more respect than this judgment allows to them.

An argument may here be addressed to those—and they are many—who think the Universe under aesthetic categories: who, though thinking it futile to judge it by our standard of goodness, still apply to it our standards of taste, and are sure, for example, that it is no accident that the world is sublime. If 'this present world' is the whole Universe, was it good art to introduce into it—that is, into men's minds—not only a standard like that of Prof. Huxley (which wholeheartedly approves and admires relentless matter and its proceedings) but all the various rival standards which on various grounds echo the Lucretian criticism *Tanta stat praedita culpa*? Was it good art² to introduce the criticism—for reason is essentially a criticism of the world—at the most conspicuous

¹ Dindorf, *Fragments*, 190. Why on any other theory than that suggested should Aeschylus mention *ἐντίποινα* (retribution) at all?

² It may at times be good to introduce into a work of art a *favourable* criticism of itself. It is illuminating when Pindar describes his work as 'finding words to fit the Doric dance-measure,' (*Δωρὶῷ φωνᾶν ἐναρμόξαι πεδίλῳ*). If this phrase had been duly noted no one would have thought that Pindar wrote *vers libre*—*numerusque fertur lege solutus*. Cf Horace, *Odes*, IV, 2, 11, Tennyson, *In Mem.*, V, 7, and Bridges's description of his poem as 'loose Alexandrines.' All these passages introduce into a poem a criticism of itself, but not a destructive criticism. The same is true of *Orlando Furioso*, XIII, 81, XIV, 65.

point, or at any point, in the drama? Is it good art to treat morality as a subordinate element in the whole? The tragedy lies just in this subordination. Man's aspirations are high and noble, and come in the end to sheer defeat. If we regard these aspirations as a high-flown fancy, the drama may seem to us to be in good taste, though in that case the deeper pathos will have vanished. To those who regard morality as having less than an absolute claim, the argument may be less obvious. To those for whom moral interests are central, they will seem too important to be introduced as a subordinate theme.¹

Another of Mr Bradley's criticisms demands attention before we pass on. His treatment of the 'Self' is the best known part of his work. Till his difficulties have been fully discussed, can we safely come to a conclusion about survival of death? Yet, surely, we know enough of what we *mean* by this word 'survival' to justify us in raising the question here. We have all of us at times wished to enjoy certain feelings or perceptions which were not yet known to us: to bring them within the unity of our personal experience. Sometimes the wish has been fulfilled. The exile has had the homecoming on which his thoughts have dwelt for years.² There is no difference in principle between these cases and what we hope for in heaven. It cannot be said fairly that we are hoping for we know not what. We hope that a certain experience may come to us—to ourselves, and not another. In hoping for heaven we are hoping for something just like that continuance of personal experience with which we are perfectly familiar here. If I am the same man after sleep as I was before it, it is not nonsense, nor self-contradictory, to suggest that my identity may continue through death: that I may feel myself to be in heaven or hell the same man as I was upon earth.

Mr Bradley's argument, then, need be no obstacle to accepting the main contention of this chapter. So long as we retain our moral outlook—especially a Christian morality which cares for human feeling—a Universe, which, to the

¹ Is Christ, who at long last is to be victorious, a less tragic figure than a Prometheus who should never be unbound?

² Homer, *Od.*, I, 58.

end, disappoints hopes which are rightly cherished, must seem unsatisfactory to reason. We recognize disappointment of hope as one of the means by which moral victory is achieved. But there is a difference between temporary disappointment and permanent. Temporary, even life-long, disappointment may be necessary in order that 'patience may have her perfect work.' But it is surely an imperfection in the world that a desire which it is good that we should feel should *never be fulfilled at all*. Can we reasonably say, 'Here is something—your own happiness or other people's—for which you ought persistently to strive. Yet it is no loss—no blemish on the world—if it is never attained?' This question should be borne in mind through all this discussion.

CHAPTER XI

UNIVERSALISM

A UNIVERSE, then, which contains no Future Life seems on various grounds defective. The argument leads us further to belief in a Future Life of a particular kind: a life which ends in moral triumph and perfect happiness. There may be, after our present life, long temporary punishment, and long painful purification. But unless at last—it may be 'at long last'—all men come to moral victory and to a happiness worthy of that victory, the evil will not be fully overcome, nor the good for which we strive fully achieved.

Our next question, then, is simple. Is it a blemish upon the Universe if any single rational being fails to have part in the final glory? Mr Bosanquet is right that the important matter is what he calls the conservation of values. This is not to be identified with the conservation of individual souls. It is better that civilization should continue while I perish, than that I should continue while civilization comes to an end. Still, as Mr Bosanquet sees, the best things cannot continue except as part of the experience of rational beings. Much may be handed on to an adequate successor—*vitai lampada tradunt*—but is there not always some loss when the individual perishes?

We are morbid, no doubt, if we dwell too much upon the satisfaction of personal claims. Valuable work is often merged in the common stock, and the individual gets no personal credit. A man of healthy mind can put up with this fate. None the less, non-recognition is sometimes a tragedy. It is a matter for reasonable rejoicing that, after two centuries, the poems of Traherne have been distinguished and acknowledged. It is right to wish that every worker should enjoy his own triumph, should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Yet, apart from a Future Life, this satisfaction cannot come to everyone.

But this is not all. Apart from our rejoicing in the continuance of the individual as primarily a triumph for *him*, we may recognize that the individual has a direct value for *others*: for his friends and potentially for mankind at large. We all feel this with persons of special charm. When Dr Scott-Holland died at Oxford a friend remarked that a distinctive type of cheerfulness had gone from the world. Would it be no blemish on the Universe that characters of this peculiar charm should cease for ever? In our regret we want, not somebody like him, but the man himself. Further, we feel the world enriched by the *variety* of such characters. For the full realization of good we need them all. This feeling is relevant in the present context unless we think that the regret is sentimental and not rational.

At the opposite extreme from the saints and heroes are the mean and base souls, the treacherous, the cruel. It is commonly said that no one is wholly bad. Is there anyone, even of these worst men, whose total disappearance from the world would involve no loss? Does not experience support the contrary belief: that everyone contributes something without which the world would be the poorer? 'I could have better spared a better man.' How often the quotation is made with undeniable justice. There is surely something worth preserving in the irresponsible charm of the attractive rascal. If someone says 'Yes: but not in the more cold-blooded villain': this answer would show a superficial outlook. It is the man of deepest insight who most finds good in his worst neighbours.

A Saint Francis is hopeful about the wicked, not because he lives amid amiable delusions, but because he is a 'luminous soul.' The good he sees is really there. The faith of the persistent fisher of men is often justified by results. It is not refuted—since the end is not yet—even by long continued failure.

Thus, it is not only with persons of special charm that we feel each individual to be worth preserving, and each variety of character to have distinctive value. The world is obviously enriched by the variety of human countenances. Each is the outward sign of a distinctive personality. If a 'wealth of minor characters' is a merit in a novelist or playwright, the same variety is good in the world. Besides the psychological laws that hold good of large groups of men,¹ there are correct generalizations which concern the individual only. The varied actions of the man of strong character have a unity of a peculiar kind. All the words and deeds of St Francis are Franciscan; of Dr Johnson, Johnsonian; of Socrates, Socratic. The same unity is seen, though less conspicuously, in duller men. If we recognize this distinctiveness of character, we shall not think the preservation of the individual unimportant, or his annihilation no blemish on the world.

It is just when we know a man best—through the insight of familiarity or of love—that we most feel his value. Kant, asked if he wished to meet in heaven the Greek philosophers, said that he most of all looked forward to meeting his old man-servant whom he had discharged for drunkenness. What in Latin is called *desiderium* and in Greek *πῶλος* has no exact English equivalent. But the verb to 'miss' expresses the same thought, and furnishes an implicit definition of personality. If, indeed, I were a mere feeble *replica* of someone else, my loss might still be matter of just regret to my friends and to myself. Our sense that the individual we love cannot be 'replaced'² by anyone else, is not dependent simply on his un-

¹ See Dr Adler's *Individual Psychology*

² A lion had made great friends with a puppy. The puppy died, and the lion seemed inconsolable. The keeper introduced a new puppy to the cage. The lion at once tore it to pieces. It is not difficult to understand the lion's indignation that a new animal should be supposed to be a substitute for its friend.

likeness to others. Still, his distinctiveness is a fact. Experience shows that it is true not only of great men but of each man that 'Nature made him and then broke the mould.'¹

Matthew Arnold complained that some people conceive heaven as like the reunion of a middle-class family. But even this popular comparison has a certain value. If we knew everyone as he is, we should feel that no one could be absent from the final union of mankind without injury to the whole. A more impressive metaphor is that of the heavenly temple in which we are all 'bulted together as living stones' each with his distinctive place and function. A medieval² hymn represents the various sufferings of humanity as the blows by which each stone is fitted for its place. It is no ignoble conception to think of heaven as embodying the age-long struggle of mankind by including every individual—from the Palaeolith and any earlier types upwards—who by his experiences and discoveries, however humble, has carried the struggle forward. By acquaintance in heaven with those by whom each victory, however small, was achieved, we should know the story of human progress with a completeness in comparison with which mere abstract knowledge would be imperfect.

There are, of course, men whose very charm lies in their detachment or their limitations. If Falstaff or Montaigne had become enthusiastic Christians, they would have lost the very character for which we value them. Horace, if he could have come under the influence of St Paul, would have been no longer Horace. That these men should have developed in detachment from Christian knowledge is, no doubt, good. It does not follow that it is good that this detachment should continue for ever, nor that anybody is absolutely unfit to come at any stage of his progress to knowledge of what is absolutely best.

This conception of heaven, it may be said, rests upon a crude desire for similarity and equality. Now, however necessary all our parts may be to the whole, some must play hum-

¹ Ariosto, *Orl Fur.*, Canto X, 84

² *Hymnal Noted*, Hymn 43 *Tumsonibus, pressuris, Expolitis lapides.*

bler parts than others. The absence of jealousy is a conspicuous element in Dante's doctrine of heaven. *In la sua voluntade e nostra pace.*¹ Yet Dr Liddon was not unreasonable in hoping that heaven will not repeat the inequalities of earth. It would increase those inequalities if some come to full glory and others are denied it. Again, one of the deepest gulfs in our present life is between the famous and the obscure. If in heaven our minds were imbued with the Pauline conception of the heavenly temple, this gulf would be done away. If each man saw himself as necessary to the whole, and knew that his necessity was recognized by everyone; if he felt himself to participate, through sympathy, gratitude, mutual recognition and community of outlook, in all the contributions of others; then he might well say with St Paul that all things were his. Would anything less than such universal participation satisfy the whole of our right ambitions for mankind?

Is it too much to say that, where each individual has been fitted—by the gift of a distinctive character and temperament, by a special history, by special temptations, and by various distinctive failures and victories—to fill a special place in God's final Kingdom, each man with his distinctive achievements is, in relation to one particular struggle and to the solution of one particular problem, the leader and example of the whole human race? All are equal in the sense that each is equally necessary to that perfection for which the Universe exists. It is not a case of being better able to spare a better man. There is no man who could be spared from the whole.

Such a solution implies, of course, the assurance that individual human beings will recognize one another in heaven. It is odd that any believer in a Future Life should ever have doubted about such recognition. It has, in fact, been a subject of much questioning. A sportsman, well known in Yorkshire, who combined with an extreme fluency of profane language a sincere interest in religion—'Swearing,' said Bishop Lightfoot, 'is not a sin: it is an ugly habit'—discussed with a village schoolmaster, who had lost his only daughter,

¹ *Paradiso*, Canto III, line 85

his hope of recognizing her hereafter. 'Do you think,' said the sportsman, 'that you will know *less* in heaven than you know here, or more?' 'More,' said the schoolmaster. 'Well, then,' said his friend, 'if you knew your daughter here, still more will you know her in heaven.'

If it seems too hasty a generalization to conclude that, because we have known nobody who on full acquaintance did not reveal some distinctive trait which was worthy of preservation, therefore we may expect immortality for everybody, let us reflect that we habitually base our recognition of the value of the individual upon his *capacity for morality*. But this recognition of each man's value because of his possession of a capacity assumed to be common to all, is in no way inconsistent with admitting that he has also a value which is distinctive.

This whole argument is addressed to those who accept the interpretation suggested above of our faith in the rationality of the Universe. If we conclude that there can be no rational justification for any lapse from perfection on the part of the Universe taken as a whole: if, in deciding what perfection must involve, we take account of the standard implied in our moral judgments: we must then regard it as a blemish on the Universe if any soul perishes before its moral capacities are developed to the full, or if, after this full development is attained, it is either destroyed or finally separated from communion with the rest of mankind. On such presupposition the perfection of the Universe involves a final state of glory in which every child of man participates.

Using the language of Theism we may state the case for universal ultimate salvation with even greater force. Granted a certain estimate of the value of personal consciousness, our faith in the rationality of the Universe will take, as we saw, a theistic form. The typical Christian looks for personal communion with God. To him Heaven without a God Who hears when we speak to Him would be mere disappointment, however rich it might be in human friendship. The value of this intercourse is traced, in part, to the conception that the God whom we thus know is the God 'in whom are all our ways,'

the author of our being, the ground, and therefore in the end the solution, of the mysteries of our life.

If, then, we believe in a God Who both 'wills all men to be saved,'¹ and also 'works all things according to the purpose' of His will,' the argument for Universalism is strong. If even a single soul is lost, if its state has become so utterly hopeless that the only merciful course is to extinguish it for ever, God's merciful purpose has been partly defeated. Evil has at one point been too strong for him. His triumph is tainted with failure. But can a good God—Who hates nothing that He has made, Who counsels us to despair of no man³—be ever willing to abandon utterly those whom He must at least have loved in their childhood, and have recognized as potential members of His heavenly kingdom? That even the worst man must have been dear to God as a child is a truth that should never be forgotten.

Again, can a good God create any heart impenetrably hard? There is no evidence that such hard hearts exist. If any soul became such, its Maker must at least have His share in the responsibility. If I sin against the light, the responsibility is mine: but it is not by my decree that such sin repeated quenches the light for ever. If this happens the decree is God's. But, if no one is impenetrably hard, must not a good God use all the resources of His grace—which *ex hypothesi*⁴ cannot be insufficient—to soften the heart of stone or (under another figure) to kindle the inward light till it is too bright to be resisted? In the language of religion, must He not put forth all the powers of His Almighty Spirit? Even in the worst sinner, light is not all extinguished. If it were all extinguished he would be innocent. But so long as the light of reason is present, though there is guilt, there is also hope. That moral knowledge, if sufficiently clear, is irresistible, is implied in all our confidence in the men whom we trust. Of some men we *know* that there are certain temptations to which they will not yield. It is as impossible for them deliberately to abandon God's service as for a courtier who desires his Prince's favour

¹ 1 Tim. ii, 4

² Eph. i, 11

³ Luke vi, 35 (R.V., margin).

⁴ On the hypothesis implied in the words 'not impenetrable'

to 'insult him to his face,'¹ or for any man deliberately to undo the work on the completion of which his heart is set. The capacity for morality and repentance implies that, given the favourable conditions, the capacity would be realized. Otherwise 'capacity' becomes an unmeaning phrase. The responsibility to produce the favourable conditions—in this case a sufficiency of clear knowledge—is a responsibility which a good God cannot neglect.

Two objections may here be raised. In framing such Universalist hopes, are we not yielding too much to weak good nature? Are we not obliterating moral distinctions? The reply must be that there is no suggestion made but that full penitence must be the precursor of pardon; nor that any punishment or other suffering, however severe, will be remitted, which is due to be exacted before glory is attained.

It may be objected, further, that the hardened sinners even if saved at long last, are not really on an equality with those who have won their salvation more easily, and after less wandering from the path of obedience. But this objection, surely, is superficial. A soul ultimately reconciled to God, and receiving God's light—a soul who has come to see that even his temptations, his evil dispositions, and the career of rebellion to which these have led, was, after all, necessary to the divine purpose so that his own distinctive victory may be achieved—can, surely, not desire that every human being shall go through the terrible experiences that have been his own. In the reconciled soul we may assume generosity of sentiment. If he has had distinctive sins and distinctive humiliations, he has also had a peculiar triumph.

If the world is to be as this argument suggests that it will be, there is a fundamental equality in the possession by each of the riches of the whole. If 'all things are ours,' we each share in all the victories. We are equal. The wealth of all is poured into the lap of each. Our possessions are equal if each is possessor of all things.

CHAPTER XII

ETERNITY AND THE BODY

FROM the question of the Universality of glory for all mankind, we turn to the question of its continuance through all time. If we once come to believe that in the world taken as a whole evil is fully overcome and good fully achieved, it is natural to conclude, not only that every child of man will be brought at length to holiness and joy, but also that this state of glory will thenceforward continue: that death will be once for all overcome: that from our moral victory and consequent happiness there will be no relapse.

We have already seen the difficulty associated with the notion of endless continuance. This, and the difficulties about Time in general, are felt by others than philosophers. Such phrases as that God lives 'not in Time but in an eternal present,' that 'Christ's great argument for the resurrection is not an argument for a Future Life but for a non-temporal eternity,' are familiar to us all. In such phrases Time is not treated as absolutely real. Time offers itself as that which contains all things. These phrases suggest that it is not real in such a sense that the life of God, or the spiritual life of man, moves within it.

None the less, to our imagination Time presents itself as a vividly evident reality. Moreover, our present concern is to discover how best we can picture the Universe in a way which shall be intelligible to the Imagination. We have already seen² the justification for forming these pictures: for seeking the best approximation to the absolute truth which Imagination, with its inherent limitations, can form.

We must all of us, for a great part of our lives, think under temporal form. As we deal with each problem, we should al-

² Chap. II, above.

ways ask ourselves whether we are accepting Time as it presents itself to our imagination, or not. Are we, for the moment, thinking temporally or non-temporally? There is no sound intermediate position. To halt between denial and acceptance of Time, is to court confusion.

Accepting Time, then, as the framework of the picture, what are we to include within it? What is the best picture of a perfect Universe which Imagination can offer? Whether we accept Time as it appears to us or not, the same questions arise about the way in which we are to picture its contents. We cannot be indifferent to the question whether we should picture the Universe as containing a life which goes on for ever.

A man who had noticed how indistinct is the image conveyed by very high numbers remarked that to him a million years was an eternity. If assured of a million years of bliss he would accept this as the equivalent of everlasting life. But, clearly, death postponed is not the same thing as death overcome. As the million years ran their course, the day of extinction would get ever nearer. We should live under a growing shadow. So long, therefore, as we imagine our future at all—and we shall all continue to do so—our optimistic faith can be expressed correctly for Imagination in one form only: that is, in the familiar hope of endless holiness, endless happiness, a moral triumph which shall never cease.

‘Why,’ asked Prof. Munsterberg, ‘should we any more wish that our lives should be prolonged eternally than that our bodies should grow immensely tall?’ Is there any more spiritual enrichment in the one extension than in the other?

The cases are not really parallel. We may enjoy space to the full without either passing through it, or expanding so as to fill it. We need not be in a place to gain all the enrichment it has to offer. To get the full aesthetic benefit of the plain spread out below me, I do not need to have crawled over every yard of it. But for full enjoyment of Time, we must actually pass through it and remember it. A sequence of events which we shall never look back to is not ours—however vividly we may have foreseen it—as places are ours

which we have never visited. Hill-towns seen from below, lakes looked at from above, may be part of my spiritual possession: but I am quite cut off from partaking in events that take place after my final extinction. Like Moses on Pisgah I may foresee a victory in which I shall not share. The fact will remain that I shall not share it. There is humiliation in the thought of

the long long time the world shall last
When Thou and I beyond the vale have passed.

But if it is a humiliation to me that I cannot see the drama out, is it not equally a humiliation that I was not a spectator from the beginning? May not the God, Who has certainly imposed upon me the one privation, afflict me with the other also?

This question; again, is more impressive in sound than in sense. The cases are not parallel. If at some point of time I become for ever extinct, I am cut off for good from every possibility of further spiritual enrichment. So far as I myself am concerned, the garnered wealth of my life-time is dissipated. What I have not had, I can now never gain: and what I have had I have lost. I am not in the same way cut off during life from the enjoyment of what took place before my birth: and if I continue to exist here or hereafter, then, through the memories of elder men, through books, through inference and tradition, through reconstruction of the past in imagination, and still more fully in the end through personal communion with Him to Whom all things are present, I may gain an ever-growing knowledge of the past. The possibility of the further development of a power which we already possess—it is well illustrated by the case of the man who faints at the breaking of another man's bone—that of knowing vicariously through others what primarily has been matter of their experience not ours, is a subject of much interest to anyone who wishes to think out his hope of a Future Life into details. To this subject we must return.¹ But, quite apart from all this, it is obviously unreasonable to compare the privation of not

¹ See, e g., p 79.

being present from the beginning of history with total extinction as a conscious being. It is not clear that the former is a privation at all.

The lack of omniscience is no more obviously an evil for man than lack of consciousness is a privation for a flower. Final extinction of a soul may none the less be an evil of a quite irremediable sort: an evil quite incapable of being the subject of such 'neutralization' as was discussed in an earlier chapter.

We are asked sometimes why consciousness should exist in 'finite centres' at all. It is enough to say here that we shall see the goodness of the existence of such centres if we see the goodness of companionship and the evil of solitude. Would it not be worse to be God's only child than to live with one's brethren in a Godless Universe?

Our next question concerns the body. If we hope for a Future Life of blessedness for all on the sole ground that without such a consummation the Universe falls short of perfection, must we conceive this Future Life as a life in which we shall have bodies?

This question, like that of eternity, cannot be treated fully till we have faced the problems of Idealism. But there are some matters upon which we can clear our minds at once.

If in a perfect Universe no hope which it is right to cherish can be finally disappointed, then no just disappointment of any sort can enter into the life of Heaven. Heaven is conceived as the culminating period of a world which is perfect as a whole. There can be no stage, then, in the heavenly life in which we could rightly say, 'This or that element in human life has passed away for ever: and yet it was so good that we cannot fail to regret it.' We ought always to wish all good things to continue: and it would be a blemish on the Universe if any of these right wishes either ceased or were left finally unsatisfied.

Our first question is whether bodily existence is good or evil. Would the detachment of our conscious life from a

physical organism be a matter for thankfulness or for regret? We must ask similar questions about each element in life in turn.

It may be answered that there are so few experiences which we should wish to leave behind for ever, that the only result of this question will be to lead us to conceive Heaven as such a confusion of inconsistent good things that in the end we shall dismiss it as an impossible state of existence. However much we may have longed for rest, still, when our time comes, *magno desiderio afficimur laborum*—we are sorry to resign this pleasing anxious being, and to leave our troubles behind us. If, then, we are to defend the hope of heaven, we must show that happiness may contain elements that in themselves are painful;¹ as in the thrill of the bold horseman which has in it an element of fear, or the sting and shock which in itself is pain, and yet makes a great part of the pleasure of the swimmer's plunge. Elements of feeling, thought, or will, which are commonly associated together may be experienced in detachment. It is not inconsistent to say, 'I rejoice to have experienced despair: I shall never wish to shake off the memory: yet I wish never to be heartbroken again: I hope to struggle for ever, but not in that desolation of mind in which I have struggled here.' Our problem in all this inquiry is to show that neither 'Heaven' nor 'a perfect Universe' are inconsistent conceptions. This problem concerns not only religion, but philosophy. To suspect that the notion of a perfect world is internally inconsistent is to throw doubt on the validity of our standard of good and evil.

Our immediate question concerns the goodness of matter and the body. It is held (chiefly, perhaps, but not exclusively by the half-educated) that the body is obviously unworthy to play a part in the life of Heaven.

As we have seen already, this notion gets no support from Berkeleian Idealism. Secondly, the hope of an incorporeal existence thus implied is a vague one. It needs further specification. What exactly is supposed to take place? Is the life of the senses supposed to cease or to continue—to cease at

¹ Bradley, *Ap. and Real*, 6th ed., p 534.

death, to continue through death, or to be extinguished for an interval and revived again afterwards? Popular faith thinks of the soul as leaving the body at death, soaring through tracts unknown, seeing, but itself invisible. The vague outlines of popular hope are filled in (as, for example, by Dante following St Thomas) by a definite doctrine that the soul which continues disembodied during an intermediate state is again to be rejoined by the body at the resurrection. In the interval, the life of the senses is supposed to continue with certain differences. Dante sees the disembodied dead and they see him: but they differ from him in respect of weight and solidity.¹ Our English Tractarians held a doctrine of Paradise not supported by the main tradition of Western Christendom. This confusion of opinion justifies us in asking those who look forward to enjoying *anywhere* a bodiless existence in what precise way they conceive this bodiless life.

If we are to see and hear and touch, what do we gain by supposing the absence of material organs and objects? We are not facing here the ultimate problem of Idealism. We are framing, for the purposes of the Imagination, a picture of the perfect Universe, not in its entirety but in some of its outlines. Now a mirage may have charm as an occasional experience, but a life which was all mirage—a phantom life of optical and other delusions—would surely be inferior to a life of contact with Matter. The explorer or the mountain-climber delights not only to see but to handle. The swimmer gets pleasure from the contact of solid flesh with buoyant water. Only those who definitely despise these pleasures could think it a gain to live in a world of empty space.

If, on the other hand, we think that the life of sense is to cease we have difficulties of another kind. Can we give any meaning to a conscious life which includes no sense-experience? The universals of thought are seen in and through the particulars of sense. These, no doubt, may be stored in memory: but if we no longer saw, but only remembered seeing, would not the change be a grave loss?

Why, then, it will be asked, is there so wide-spread a revolt

¹ *Inf.*, III, 93. Cf. *Virg.*, *Aen.*, VI, 412, and St Thomas's well-known distinction between the tangible and the palpable.

against the doctrine of a bodily resurrection? It is due in part to difficulties of imagination rather than of reason. The questions that are asked are rather obvious than profound. What is to happen at the resurrection to men whose bodies were eaten by cannibals or burnt to ashes? May not the matter in my body now have belonged to other people before me? What, then, of the cases, where 'the body of the king has made a progress through the guts of a beggar?' Is there Matter enough in the world to supply bodies for all the millions of mankind? Would the man who died of a tumour wish that all the material particles which had been in his body at death should be restored to him at the resurrection?

These difficulties rise partly from needless assumptions. The resurrection need not imply that all the Matter in my body at death will be collected together for me in Heaven. Other objections are due to our increased knowledge of physiology. To meet in detail every difficulty which occurs to the modern mind, we should need a greater effort of constructive imagination than was required when the subject was treated by St Thomas: and such efforts are less congenial to our age than to his. The imaginative difficulty, however, is no proof that the problem is insoluble in principle. The critic who has once observed how the great artists among mankind have dealt with problems which in advance would have seemed to be beyond solution, will hesitate to set limits to the artistry of Nature or of God.¹ If a painter took as his subject 'Westminster Abbey on the morning of the Resurrection,' it is likely that he would neither satisfy our taste nor convince our sense of probability. If we attribute to God supreme artistic skill, it is conceivable that He might plan even a rising from the tomb which would involve no violation of aesthetic principles. The man who suggests that aesthetic considerations are irrelevant here will perhaps find after self-examination that his own objections to the Resurrection of the Body are fundamentally aesthetic.

In this context it is worth while to point out that the hope

¹ Milton's success in uniting Pagan, Jewish, and Christian elements could not have been predicted. Such success is enough to justify us in thinking possible the most diverse features in one harmonious Universe.

of the resurrection may be held in two forms. In the *First Epistle to the Corinthians* St Paul pictures the body rising from the tomb. In the *Second Epistle* the body comes down from Heaven.¹ The latter description has the advantage that we can conceive of our departed friends as alive in full activity at the present time. The earlier description, on the other hand, which has dominated the Christian tradition, preserves better the sense of continuity between our earthly life and our life in Heaven. It is also in harmony with the tenderness and reverence with which we regard the bodies and graves of the dead. The saying of Socrates that his friends may bury him where they like 'if they can catch him,' has a Pagan rather than a Christian savour. The wish of many a simple Christian to rise among his friends in a familiar churchyard has in it nothing intrinsically ignoble; and it would be at least in accordance with some of the unexpected tendernesses which piety detects in the workings of God's Providence if sometimes when this wish has been passionately felt it should be literally fulfilled.

The general question is whether the life of Heaven would be better or worse if it were the life of disembodied spirits. The beauty of human flesh and form has been celebrated by the sculptors of Greece and the painters of Venice. If their estimate of its goodness is just, an optimistic doctrine of the Universe must include perfection of bodily form among the glories of Heaven. One may fairly suspect that the man who hesitates about this conclusion holds the opinion criticized by Prof. Bosanquet; namely, that a material attenuation must be associated with the development or liberation of the spirit.

A further question is suggested by the title of this chapter. Can an organic body be conceived as lasting for ever? Is it possible, as St Paul thinks, for a material body to become incorruptible?

We may well ask in reply—Why not? Even Kant does not allege any *a priori* physiological principles. He speaks of a pure physics, but not of a pure physiology. No one can say that an organism could not conceivably come into being with

¹ 1 Cor. xv, 2 Cor. v.

such physiological equilibrium as to be eternally healthy. Life may involve change in the sense of movement. Need it involve corruption in the sense of weakness, pain, offensive smell, and ultimate dissolution? An incorruptible body, we shall surely conclude, is unfamiliar but not *a priori* impossible. We cannot reasonably be expected to construct in detail a physiology of the glorified body. But is this a valid argument against conceiving the possibility of an organism which may perform its functions healthily through all time?

CHAPTER XIII

EMOTIONS AND PASSIONS

WE come now to the hardest of our problems. If Heaven is to be conceived as fulfilling every just hope, is it to include the full development of all our emotions and of all our intellectual faculties?

First, are we in Heaven to retain love, in the sense in which love is the theme of Romeo and Juliet? The modern religious world is making up its mind to an affirmative answer. The meeting again of lovers is, for those who think such love good, one of the plainest conclusions from faith in a good God and a perfect Universe. Why should God have created so fair a thing for mere destruction?

It is obvious, of course, that many difficulties will here suggest themselves. Miss Schreiner¹ puts the case of a woman who has lost her mother in infancy, whose lover has died in her prime, whose son has closed her eyes when she dies at a ripe old age. If the desires of all three hearts are to be satisfied, the woman (it is argued) must appear at the resurrection at once as aged mother, as grown-up girl and as new-born baby.

This problem demands analysis. Can a Universe which should satisfy all these desires be consistently conceived, or

¹ *The Story of an African Farm*, Part II, Ch. 13. In *The Challenge of the Universe*, pp 175-83 I discussed this objection fully

not? The difficulty is not so obviously insoluble as it is made to appear. Need the son be disappointed if his mother appears with the strength of a woman in her prime? She need not of necessity have lost all that she has acquired in the experiences of old age. Again, is it certain that the mother must desire to meet her child as an undeveloped infant? If the parting had been due to separation on earth, the mother's regret would be, not that the child had grown up, but that she had missed what other mothers have experienced. That, in some form, Heaven should supply what this longing requires for its satisfaction, will be seen to be not inconceivable, if we reflect how often in parallel circumstances a like satisfaction is attained on earth. In youth we declare that if we cannot have a particular satisfaction in a particular form it will be of no value. Life often shows that such judgments are too hasty. We gain two objects of desire separately which we had stoutly maintained we could only gain in union. There are those who have remembered their past losses, who yet have found such satisfaction that, if they could have foreseen it at the moment of disappointment, they would have known even then that the compensation would be complete. The same thing may happen on a yet fuller scale in Heaven.

There are cases, indeed, of passions which never come, and never seriously seek to come, to completeness. Such passions are described in some of Browning's lyrics. Some of us would feel that their lives were left incomplete if Heaven did nothing to finish these unfinished themes. That such passions should be enjoyed in Heaven vicariously (that is, by sympathetic insight into their enjoyment by others), will not seem unmeaning to those who reflect that to look into happiness through another man's eyes is not always a bitter experience; but may, if our own chief wishes are satisfied, be a very happy one. If in Heaven we may conceive ourselves as enjoying with as vivid sympathy the pleasures of others, as here we often feel their pains—we have seen how the breaking of a man's limb is felt like a direct shock to the bystander—the possibility of vicarious enjoyment might meet all that sense of imperfection which results from these incompleting romances.

The same possibility deserves to be considered where more serious feeling is involved. Mr Bradley's question—'Would two friends who had buried their enmity in a woman's grave still be friends at the resurrection?'—raises a harder problem than Miss Schreiner's. Yet it is not certain that everyone's love-story is best completed just as he would at first wish. Friends have before now remained friends when one has lost, and the other has won, the woman pursued by both. The loser, happy with another bride, has become wholly reconciled to the loss. Such cases sometimes leave, as the saying is, 'ragged edges'—themes taken into life and inartistically dropped. But even in this world it is not always so. The very failure may work itself into the unity of the triumph. It is remarkable that the greatest of all love stories begins with the love of the hero for another woman than the heroine.¹ God, then, might work out a completed scheme in which no theme is left unfinished, and no one feels any ultimate disappointment of his hope; and this, not because the individual forgets or abases his hopes, but because he recognizes that there is no element in them which has not been fully realized. There are elements in happiness which we really value in their general form, though we may fancy that they are bound up with an individual. Some of those who have felt most sure that only one woman in the world could satisfy them, have found out the soonest that they were mistaken.

There are, of course, cases where this exclusive devotion is real. There is nothing to indicate that the Universe is such that in any one of these cases of absolute fidelity the hope formed must be for ever disappointed. An ancient teacher is alleged to have given, to the question propounded to Christ by the Sadducees, a different answer from His. If a woman has had two husbands on earth, he said (speaking of what is to happen to her in Heaven), *Detur priori*. We need not assume that this principle, *Detur priori*, nor even *Detur marito*, need in every case hold good in heaven. It is impossible, of course, to tabulate in full the innumerable difficulties of this kind that may be thought of. Each generation will see new problems of

¹ Rosaline in *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene III

its own. All that we can hope to do is to deal with each as it arises. It raises a good hope that no such difficulties will be found insoluble, when we see that questions, which at first sight look formidable, are not so unanswerable as they at first seem.

Another aspect of married life needs to be dealt with frankly, yet with reserve. St Augustine¹ seems to suggest that in Heaven we might all be naked, with a nakedness which should give no offence, because of the total absence of sexual passion. Yet surely a life would be not only happier, but also more in accordance with the principles of civilization, in which we should retain both our clothes and our passions, and with our passions the occasions of their legitimate gratification. If Heaven is to exclude all sensual passion and its enjoyment, what but disappointment can it offer to those whose chief complaint against life has been their unwilling celibacy; who grieved most of all that the intensest of physical enjoyments has been denied them?² No good man could desire to be continually immersed in such pleasures: but never to have known them at all, and to be cut off from all prospect of knowing them in the future, is a burden which to many is intolerable. If Heaven is to afford no relief to these, not only must they themselves find Heaven a mockery, but by sympathy all their brethren must suffer with them. A Heaven which should bring about such disappointment would not be the closing scene of a perfected Universe.

It is sometimes said that in Heaven these sufferers would cease to desire that which they had desired on earth. But this is no solution of the problem, except to those who think this whole realm of passion evil or valueless. Those who hold the normal opinion that love and its accompanying passions are necessary to the completeness of our nature, will see that a peace gained by the mere stiling of our passions would be a peace gained by loss.

¹ *De Civitate Dei*, XXII, Ch. XVII. If the saints in glory are not here supposed to be naked, why is *adspicientis concupiscentia* mentioned at all?

² *Ecclesiasticus* xxx, 20, and xx, 4. The charming episode of Arsete in Tasso's *G. L.* (Canto XII, etc.) shows that even this great privation need not be an unmixed evil so far as earthly life is concerned. We could not wish it to be eternal.

We must remember here that to many it is not virginity, as such, that is their burden, but the absence from their life of paternity or motherhood. That the essential part of the charm of the paternal and maternal relations might, under the changed conditions of Heaven, be preserved without motherhood as we know it, is not inconceivable. We must not limit the power of God or of Nature by the limits of our own restricted imagination. Again, if anyone chooses to give a free reign to his imagination—to reflect what might conceivably happen in intermediate states coming between this life and the time when ‘that which is perfect is come’—he may conceive that in such intermediate states our existence need not necessarily be bodiless. So, even with all our restrictions of outlook, he may be able to picture solutions for some of the difficulties which seem most perplexing. Something has already been done in this way by the poets.

Yet we certainly must not take for granted that no man can be satisfied until he has himself directly enjoyed every sensation which seems to him attractive. That our desires in this whole realm of emotion are associated with intellectual curiosity, is indicated by well-known phrases. We wish to *know* these emotions. But is it inconceivable that our power of insight into the feelings of others might rise to such a pitch of vividness as to give us enjoyment of their pleasures real enough to satisfy in some cases both our curiosity and our longing? No one could have such satisfaction without many direct enjoyments of his own: but if he had these as a background he might enjoy some pleasures vicariously. Some of our earthly experiences come near to this.

If our thoughts are thus to lie open to one another’s gaze,¹ is such transparency consistent with privacy? We need not, however, assume that if in Heaven some of our joys lay open to the knowledge of our friends, therefore we could have no secret thoughts at all. A complete insight into the constitution of the Universe might be open to us all in the sense that we possessed principles of reason from which conceivably the whole world could be deduced in all its wealth of detail. It

¹ Tanqueray, *Synopsis Theol Dogm.*, III, 603.

would not follow that such knowledge could ever be actualized in full in any human being. There are many secret things which a man's most intimate friends are willing not to share with him. Twilight and bright daylight—in a literal and in a metaphorical meaning—exist together on earth. It is not inconceivable that they should exist together in Heaven.

The question we have just considered is typical of a whole class of gratuitous difficulties. The pictures of Fra Angelico, and the descriptions of the Apocalypse, are probably the best symbolic representations of a life of glory which can ever be made. Yet they are but symbols after all. We need not live our whole time in Heaven under so fierce a light as beats upon the Blessed in the Golden City. In the best type of human existence there must be shades as well as high lights, half-tones as well as primary colours, even sometimes the enveloping robe of a kindly darkness.

From love in the narrower sense we may turn to love in the wider. If family ties and national ties are good and not evil, we cannot wish for the obliteration in Heaven of these lines of distinction. Indeed, in all these problems we may follow out the general principle of St Augustine, that in Heaven the evil of each thing will be withdrawn, but the good preserved. *Vitia detrahentur: natura servabitur*. It is only by subordinate organisms, by sub-divisions such as families, classes, social 'sets,' and nations, that the complete unification of mankind can be realized. If our relations to our nearest neighbours were as uniform as those of the grains of sand, no high measure of social organization could be reached.

There is another question somewhat similar to that of sexual love. Must not a Heaven, worthy of the name, give opportunity for the exercise of physical as well as of moral courage? In Homer—whose descriptions of battle are realistic rather than romantic, whose frequent theme is the warrior's weariness of war, and his desire to return home—there are vivid pictures of men and Gods rejoicing in the battle-cry. To many readers of the *Iliad* these descriptions are the

best parts of the poem. Is the glorious vigour, then, of the Homeric battlepieces to be in Heaven the description of a kind of life in which we can no more take part? Would not such a Heaven be a place of partial degeneration both physical and moral? It is an evasion to say that the courage of battle might be sublimated in Heaven—might be turned to the winning of moral victories. To speak so is to misunderstand the issue. Dean Church once drew a comparison between the factions of medieval Florence and the factions of Tractarian Oxford. But it is just because the element of physical danger was absent from Oxford that Mediaeval Florence surpasses it as a scene for drama and romance. Oxford, with many advantages, lacks this one distinctive element of charm. Is Heaven to share the same defect?

For those who regard the world as the work of God, there must be some significance in the constant attractiveness for poets and others of the conception of wounds speedily and certainly, but miraculously, healed. Our Teutonic forefathers, we are told, looked forward to a time when the heroes in the life to come should spend their days in fighting and their nights in feasting with those whom they had struck down now restored to life and health. The same notion of wounds miraculously healed has attracted more civilized men than they: Virgil, Dante, Milton.¹ If, in a life to come, this poetic imagination could be realized, there would disappear the one argument against the inclusion of warfare amid the joys of Heaven. Short, sharp pangs need cause no diminution of happiness. As Mr Bradley has pointed out, states in which there is an element of pain may be pleasant taken as a whole. May not God, then, realize the hopes of Pagans as well as those of Christians, where the former are manly and noble? May not one of the experiences of the heavenly life be a literal 'shout of them that triumph' as well as a literal 'song of them that feast'?

There are many similar problems which the reader must solve by similar methods. Are we to be conceived of as still

¹ See, especially, Dante, *Inf*, 28-41.

making history in Heaven, or merely as interpreting and contemplating that which has been already made? Are we in Heaven to engage in every type of activity which has delighted us here? One of the delights of childhood is an acuteness of taste and smell which we sometimes lose as life advances. Will this be restored to us? Again, there are some activities which we can hardly employ in Heaven precisely as we employ them on earth. If the faculty of the engineer or surgeon is employed upon a different object, it is no longer exactly the same faculty. But in employing a faculty in new circumstances we may retain all that is essential in the joy of its exercise. If anyone can mention some employment which seems necessary to his happiness, which yet he cannot conceive as adapted to the life of Heaven, we must consider his case upon its own merits. The more general objection that varied occupations conflict with the rapture of the Beatific Vision we have already met. This rapture has been compared with ineffable sweetness and unapproachable light, with musical sounds so delightful that if repeated they would have drawn the soul from the body. It is significant that St Thomas who well knew what was implied in the beatific vision should yet have conceived the glorified saints as travelling about to enjoy the varied beauties of God's creation.¹

'There are those,' said Mr Bradley, 'who, till they had recovered their dog would not wish to sit down among the angels.' What is the place in Heaven of our friendships with dogs and horses? If a man who—as in the legend of Gellert—had killed his faithful dog on a false charge had then found out the truth, it would be to his credit if he felt he could never be quite happy again till a full reconciliation had taken place. We may thus include the renewal of our friendship with animals among the necessary ingredients of a life which is to satisfy all right desires. There is no more reason for regarding these friendships than for regarding any others as unfit to take their place within the harmonious unity of the heavenly life.

¹ See *Sum Theol*, Suppl 80 (82)

CHAPTER XIV

PUNISHMENT AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

WE have hitherto considered the various elements necessary to a complete state of glory. We must now ask what steps may need to intervene between this present life and Heaven. We must deal also with the question of punishment after death. The reader who has been convinced by the arguments of an earlier chapter will think of all such punishment as belonging to an intermediate state, since we have seen reasons against thinking that anyone's punishment can last for ever.

The question of punishment is a grave one. It has been said by a thoughtful writer that—since popular religion in England got rid of Purgatory in the sixteenth century and of Hell in the nineteenth—any modern belief in a Future Life probably does more harm than good. If Heaven is the only kind of future state that one thinks of, the belief is rather a sedative than a stimulant.

Since the Christian is essentially a penitent, and must humble himself both before God and his fellow men, he must see that not only God but also human society has done more for him than he can ever repay. Thinking of his shortcomings he must see that he dies a debtor to God and man. It cannot surprise him, then, if he finds that after death some punishment still remains to be exacted from him. It might, no doubt, be argued that the man fully reconciled to God should not regard his sufferings as penal. He will be willing to bear after death bitter and long-continued sufferings: but will regard them as medicine or purgation rather than as punishment. Still, even in the best there remains what St Paul calls 'the flesh': and the flesh is ever rebellious and unreconciled.¹ May not the flesh, then, even after death be the object of just pun-

¹ Rom viii, 7.

ishment? Can anyone die confident that punishment, even long and severe punishment, does not lie before him?

For those who die unreconciled to God, the question must be otherwise phrased. That due punishment for sin is one of the demands of reason is the great lesson of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. Unless we regard Dante as a singularly wrong-headed man, we cannot read him without forming the conclusion that future punishment has been too much absent from the modern mind. Read, in particular, the noble lines¹ in which he speaks with terror of his own future passage through purgatory.

The general argument for belief in an intermediate state is that even the best man is not at death fit for heaven. In a heaven worthy of the name we must have a will fixed immovably upon obedience, a firm and definitive choice of good, an unalterable loyalty, the confident purpose of the man who knows that not even the fiercest temptation could shake him. But who in this life attains to such a state of mind? This argument may be used in favour of Paradise as conceived by the Tractarian divines, or of Purgatory as taught by the Church of Rome.

Again, there may be more than one such life intermediate between earth and heaven. Browning spoke of 'the next life' in such a way as to suggest that it might be one of a series such that each member of the series might teach its special lesson. There seems to be no reason why the same man should not pass through several circles of Purgatory. It has been commonly assumed that the intermediate state is for the soul only: that man resumes bodily existence only when he enters upon his final state whether of glory or of punishment. But, surely, whatever arrangement of successive lives is necessary for the accomplishment of perfection in the Universe, and for the full development of the individual character, this arrangement our faith in the perfection of the Universe will lead us to expect. We need not restrain our speculation by the traditional limits.

¹ Dante, *Purg*, Canto XIII, 136, etc.

Again, may not the demands of adequate punishment require that in one or more of such intermediate states we should have a bodily existence. We have seen already that an intermediate state in which body as well as soul should partake might well be required for another purpose than that of punishment. Those who on earth have lived in compulsory virginity, and who have complained less of the lack of successful love than that they have never known parenthood, can hardly wish that in the final state of all they should be parents literally. What would be the position of children born in such conditions? The desire, then, to have 'known' fatherhood or motherhood, if not fulfilled here, can be fulfilled literally in an intermediate state only. This may, indeed, be one of the cases where we can apply the principle already suggested, namely, that we may fulfil separately two desires which we have always thought of as to be fulfilled together.¹ The joy of finding someone dependent on one's own protection and care might conceivably be realized in Heaven quite apart from actual parenthood, and yet might not be felt to be incomplete or a mockery. This joy, too, might come to one who had already known elsewhere the physical joys of parenthood. We have no right to limit the resources of the Universe, or to deny its power to fulfil all legitimate wishes. We can, of course, construct no satisfactory *picture* of the way in which all our wishes could be together fulfilled. It is well to recognize also that our complaint commonly is that we have never 'known' this or that experience. No one wishes to go on enjoying the same pleasures without intermission. Even the man most passionately devoted to a particular enjoyment is satisfied to have known this joy on an adequate number of occasions, and to possess a vivid enough memory to be able to live his pleasure over again when he wants to do so.

If we once recognize how very passionate the regret at having never known a certain pleasure may be, we shall feel that the question of the possibility of enjoying these pleasures (which we have not as a fact enjoyed here, which at the same time are unfit to be enjoyed in the final state of all) is no trivial

¹ Cf. Ch. XII, above.

one. The hope of the solution of this difficulty in some such manner as that suggested here should not be beyond the reach of faith. Faith should perceive that the supreme artistry by which the Universe is ordered may without violation of aesthetic unity satisfy all the multifarious longings of mankind. If we live in a world which embodies the Idea of the Good, it is not too much to hope even for a completed accomplishment from which nothing, not even the smallest boon, is lacking.

CHAPTER XV

IDEALISM

WE have seen already certain difficulties about Time and Eternity and also certain difficulties about Matter. The problem of Matter we can hardly ignore if we are to come to satisfactory conclusions about the Resurrection of the Body.

We shall ask, then, whether the Idealism which denies the reality of Space, Matter, and Time raises new difficulties or, on the contrary, helps us to a solution.

The arguments which have led men to these denials have been already dealt with in part. But, besides the difficulty that Space, and also Time, must each be thought of both as a Quantum and as not a Quantum—as having size and yet no size in particular—we find also that both Space and Time profess to give to everything that falls within them a definite location. Yet both Space and Time fail to do this. It would make no difference if the whole material Universe were moved a yard to the right or a yard to the left: nor if the series of physical events had begun half an hour earlier than they did. There are no outside limits—no external *moenia mundi*—to which anything would get nearer, or from which it would get further off. Thus, if we think the matter out, Space and Time give no definite location to anything.

Again, Space and Time appear each as a Whole, of which spaces and times are parts. But a whole is that of which no

part is lacking. No space, however, can be so large as to include every area. We can never arrive at a point of Time at which no part of Time is lacking—at which no time is still in the future.

There is lastly the difficulty suggested by Kant's well-known phrase which speaks of Space and Time as two self-subsistent nonentities.¹ This difficulty happens to be of special interest to those who believe in God. If Time and Space are self-subsistent—if they cannot be created because the places which they would fill must be there already and must be themselves Space and Time—this cannot well be reconciled with Theism.

Now we have seen already that such Idealism does not address itself to the imagination.

We have seen also that it does not seek to deprive us of our common knowledge, for example, of our knowledge of physics and history. It suggests that our statements on these subjects, before they can be absolutely true, need transformation: but it does not suggest that they are wholly false or worthless. We shall ask, in words like Dr McTaggart's, 'Of what reality does our common knowledge hold good?' since it does not hold good of a real world in Space and Time, as it professes to do. We shall answer that conscious beings and their experiences are the reality about which common knowledge holds good.

The main question we shall have to face is this: How, on the basis of a denial of Matter, Space and Time (a denial to which we seem to be driven) can we maintain our general trust in memory, in history, in physical science, in our everyday beliefs about Nature?

If Matter, Space and Time are unreal, what remains? One thing at least remains, conscious experience. For at least one example of a conscious being is real, namely, my own immediately present self. The world I see and touch may conceivably be pure hallucination. My neighbours may be merely things in my dream. My memories of the past may be all delu-

¹ *K. d. R.* V, p. 56, Meik., p. 34.

sions. Still, the fact remains that I have all these experiences. *Cogito ergo sum*. My experiences may be all a mere dreaming. But even if so the fact remains that I have this dream.

Here, then, am I—a substance (to use the word in its simplest sense) possessing attributes: a knowing, feeling, thinking, being.

But if this 'substance' exists, there is no reason why other similar substances should not exist too: those, for example, of whose existence memory tells me—phases as I call them of my own past self, which may be real without being really past—those again of which my belief in the reality of my neighbours assures me, *their* present and past selves. If there may be one substance possessing attributes (as there is) there may be other substances possessing different sets of attributes, though the reality of these may not be so certain to me as my own present reality is.

Can I, then, on the basis of a belief that such sentient substances are the only real things in the world,¹ justify my trust—a trust which sanity forbids me to relinquish—in the general truthfulness of our agreed beliefs? Various attempts to show how this may be done have been made, and are being made, by Idealist philosophers.

Here two problems arise. Can I conceive my own history as real, a real succession of connected events if the succession is not really temporal? Can historical succession be real if Time is not?

Let us ask first, How do I distinguish what I call my own past experiences from yours?

They are bound together with my present consciousness by a bond of memory of a quite peculiar type. 'My own past' I remember from within. Your 'past' states I know by inference.²

There is also a causal bond. The burnt child dreads the fire.

¹ Among the objects of our knowledge—among the truths we know—we distinguish some that are hypothetical, e.g. the mathematical axioms, and others that concern reality. *I* am a fact—am real. The axiom is merely a truth hypothetical in the sense that if perfectly straight lines exist—which may not be the case—no two of them can enclose a space.

² See note on p. 13.

Causal succession does not necessarily involve temporal succession. The present position of this book is due to the present position of the hand which holds it. Temporal succession is not involved in the category of cause itself.

Thirdly, there is a resemblance in character between my past and present selves. However great mental or moral convulsions a man may have experienced, his various phases exhibit, not merely resemblance, but what we justly call *unity*.

Lastly, there is the bond of moral responsibility. I may be more distressed at another person's sin than at my own. But I have not the same duty of repenting of it.

The difficulty, then, of justifying memory and history, on a basis of a denial of Time, is not insuperable. The facts which appear as past are not really past: but they are real, and have their place in a succession.

The second question to be considered is whether, on the basis of a denial of Time, Space and Matter, we can justify the inferences drawn by Physical Science and common sense.

We may find help here in a phrase from Plato's *Timæus*.¹ The Creator is there spoken of as looking to a 'pattern'—an 'eternal pattern'—to guide him in his creation of the world. Plato conceives this pattern as an ideal; as the system of truths concerning what the world *ought* to be.

Now the Universe is to us an object not only of knowledge but of admiration. If we believe that our admiration is just, we are believing that we have knowledge, correct even if incomplete, of the ideal to which the world ought to conform. If we have faith in the world's rationality in an optimistic sense, grasp of this ideal is a guide to knowledge of the actual world.

But, for the present, let us dismiss this Platonic Optimism, and interpret the 'pattern' more prosaically: conceiving it not as the system of truths concerning what the world *ought* to be, but merely as the system of truths about what a world existing in Time and Space *would be if* such a world could really exist.

This conception, even if intricate, is not wholly unfamiliar. The Idealist's conception of geometrical laws is that they pre-

scribe what certain geometrical facts would be if Space were real. There are perhaps in the world no straight lines: but, if there were, no two of them could enclose a space. Indeed we need not here mention Idealistic theories at all. No line, however straight it may at first sight appear, is really quite straight. A microscope will always reveal gaps in it or twists. Yet this fact does not diminish the authority of the axiom. It is still true that if there could be two perfectly straight lines they could not enclose a space. Thus the notion of truths which concern something purely hypothetical need give us no difficulty.

Starting, then, with this conception of a 'pattern,' as the mere list of truths about what a world in Time and Space would be if such a thing could exist at all, we may state the supreme laws of the Universe thus. It is a law, first, that conscious beings, their number, their characters and internal tendencies, shall be just such as this 'pattern' contains. Secondly, it is a law that their passive experiences—their feelings and perceptions—shall also be in accordance with this 'pattern.' This conception implies real conscious beings each with a limited experience, each occupying a position in the real world corresponding to that which some conscious being in the temporal and spatial 'pattern' occupies, having the experiences which go with that position, reacting to it in accordance with his own character, and thus influencing by these reactions other conscious beings through their sensations and perceptions. The contents of such a world, so far as its conscious elements are concerned, are just like those which common sense believes in. The experiences of each individual are just what they would be if it really lived in a world of Space and Time. The succession of conscious states within the individual person's history is a real succession, though the connection which makes it is through causal and other bonds and is not really temporal.

The 'pattern' presents both conscious and non-conscious events. The world it sets before us is a world containing both material objects and sentient beings. It presents the material universe as occupying a certain part of infinite Time and

Space. Its laws prescribe the reactions of these various sentient and non-sentient beings on one another. The real world cannot conform to everything in this pattern. It cannot realize the material objects, for this would involve the reality of Space. But where reality *can* conform to the pattern it does so. The conscious experiences which the pattern prescribes are realized in full. Thus the real world as Idealism conceives it is, so far as consciousness is concerned, just like the world in which common sense believes.

We must think out these general laws in relation to all the laws of Nature which we acknowledge. We must also think out the whole theory in relation to obvious objections.

A phrase has just been quoted from the *Timaeus*. To some readers it may make the theory here expounded plainer if it is put forth in the form of a Platonic myth. It is only necessary to warn the reader not to regard this myth as a serious essay in Theism. It is merely a pictorial form for the expression of an Idealistic doctrine.

'God then,' the myth will say, 'acting under the compulsion of His own goodness, decided to bring into existence rational creatures. Being good, He desired that these should lack nothing which could contribute to the fullness of their happiness and the completeness of their nature. He decreed, therefore, that besides having the power of thinking, they should possess also perception and imagination; and, in addition to these, the capacity to influence one another by their work, that is, by systematic acts of will directed upon the objects of their perception. To effect these purposes by the actual creation of material things was, as we have seen, impossible. But neither was it necessary. Another method lay open. The Universe as presented to man by his senses and memory, that is, the Universe in Space and Time, is an object, not only of knowledge but of aesthetic admiration also. Such admiration presupposes the presence in our mind of an aesthetic Ideal. If our admiration is well grounded, then this ideal is no mere creation of fancy. It has objective truth. It is Plato's 'eternal pattern.'

'God,' our myth continues, 'kept in mind this eternal pat-

tern: a pattern whose value is not impaired by its incapacity to be realized completely. Keeping this Ideal in mind, He ordered by one comprehensive rule the rational beings whom He created, both in respect of the number of them which He should create, of their various characters, of their perceptions and sensations, of the relations between their acts of will and the passive experiences of themselves and their neighbours.'

'This comprehensive rule,' so the myth concludes, 'was that these conscious beings, their characters and volitions and the connections among them should (so far as a non-temporal and non-spatial fact can agree with a temporal and spatial Ideal) conform exactly to this ideal of a world in Space and Time.' Thus to the plain man, to whom the hypothesis of a material world offers no difficulties, his experience seems to confirm this hypothesis at every point. What difference is there that he could detect? Even the philosopher who perceives what has really taken place is able, during most of his life, to forget his special knowledge, and to think and act like other people.

This theory should be considered carefully in the light of all possible objections. An obvious question is to ask how it agrees with our usual method of gaining knowledge by looking at an object from different sides.

This method, regarded as this kind of Idealism must regard it, might be roughly imitated by a mechanical device. Suppose two men sitting side by side and gazing into two separate stereoscopic pictures. These two pictures must represent a table and an object upon it, as these would be seen if looked at from opposite sides. Each man sees in the picture a moving photograph of his fellow spectator, who is really sitting beside him, portrayed as if sitting opposite. Now the machinery might be so contrived that each movement of each spectator, and each act done to the object, might be followed by a corresponding change in each of the two pictures. Here we should have two men, not looking at the same material objects, who might still communicate with one another because their separate perceptions are brought into agreement by a system

of devices connecting one man's experiences with the other's. If, then, for this notion of the moving photographs devised to produce an ingeniously deceptive appearance, we substitute the conception of a system of laws connecting our acts of will with our own and other people's sensations and these sensations with one another—if instead of what is commonly regarded as the ground of the unity of the experiences of different persons, namely, that the same material object is seen and touched by all, we assume that each has in his mind a picture of the same world, though presented as it would be if seen from different points of view, and further that there are laws regulating the contents of these various pictures and their relation to one another and to human acts of will—a world so conceived would be no mere collection of similar and accordant *dreams*. As regulated by laws, it would have such objectivity as makes it a real object of knowledge.

It is sometimes objected that such Idealism implies a routine of perceptions: that there is in truth *no* routine of perceptions (since I may visit a house passing indifferently from cellar to garret, or from garret to cellar): that the rules which common sense and science teach us refer primarily to material objects rather than to our experiences.

The exposition given above justifies our study of the material world, and seems therefore to meet this objection in advance. The study of the world in Space and Time, as it is shown us in perception and memory, reveals the rules and principles by which that world is governed, and from these the theory enables us to deduce the course of human experiences.

It may be objected also that such a theory as is here put forward takes away much of the aesthetic charm of the world: that it denies the solidity in which the climber rejoices as he grasps the rock, or the swimmer as he breasts the wave. Yet the world which is here asserted is no less solid than that which is denied. If we are not in contact with a real matter which we can kick, we are in contact with an ineluctable necessity which we can kick *at* or kick *against*.

It may be objected that the duty here acknowledged of each

man to repent of certain past sins as his own, implies substantial unity. Substance is thus thought of as the *correlatum* of change. The penitent is the same substance as the man who sinned. But is not our knowledge of this peculiar bond which entails on me the duty of repenting of certain misdeeds in the past, prior to, and independent of, this conception of substance? I recognize this moral bond between my immediately present self and certain acts remembered as past. This bond is clear enough to my moral consciousness. The conception of substantial unity adds nothing to its clearness.

Apart from the denial of the reality of Time, it seems better to conceive substance as the correlatum of attribute than as the correlatum of change. Does not difference of attribute constitute difference of substance? Are not my sick and my convalescent self—my sinning and my penitent self—better described as two substances than as one?

NOTE

MUCH in this discussion has turned on infinity. In answer to the common popular remark that 'infinity transcends our faculties,' Prof. Cook-Wilson used to say, 'If so, we have transcended them already. We know quite well what infinite extension means.' What we cannot do—he said—is to think the infinite under a finite category. But is not reality itself a finite category? Is not a 'real indefinite' impossible? We can *think* of an infinite, or other indefinite, quantity. We can *offer* it, as when Artaxerxes offered Ezra an indefinite quantity of salt: salt without prescribing how much (Ezra vii, 22.) But a *real* quantity, surely, is always definite. A man's income, we say, is 'anything from £1,500 to £2,000: but in each year it must be definite to a halfpenny. If we are sure that the population of the world, whatever it is, stands at each moment at an exact figure—if we are sure that the amount of salt which Ezra *took* must have been definite to a grain—is it not equally clear that a *real* collection of cubic miles must be definite in number? Our assurance of the definiteness of the amount of salt has nothing to do with our knowledge of salt as such. It is a metaphysical assurance, and concerns the character of reality.

There is always a danger that Idealism shall involve us in a vicious circle. When Mill states that our knowledge is not of matter but of possibilities of experience, and adds that we are knowing that *if* we were on the banks of the Hooghly we should see Calcutta, it is fair to answer that the Hooghly is as material as Calcutta itself. Berkeley (*P. of H. K.*, I, Sec. 3) makes a similar slip. The theory expounded above is expressly designed to escape this vicious circle.

It is a useful exercise in reading Berkeley, to distinguish his various arguments. They are not all of equal value. He argues (Sec. 22) that no one idea nor anything like an idea can exist

otherwise than in a mind perceiving it: that we do not *mean* anything by the actual existence of an idea distinct from its being perceived (Sec. 45). The only thing whose existence we deny, he says, is that which *philosophers* call Matter or corporeal substance. 'And in doing of this there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I daresay, will never miss it' (Sec. 35). Cf. Kant's remark (*K. d. R. V.*, p. 45; Meik., 28) that the thing in itself is never inquired after in experience.

Berkeley argues further that external bodies are no good, no use, and explain nothing. (*P. of H. K.*, Secs. 19-22.) He assumes that Matter means something unperceived (Sec. 18). In respect of the uselessness of material bodies the reader may reflect upon the part that they play in some theories of Psycho-physical Parallelism.¹

He argues that ideas are passive, inert (Sec. —); mind alone being active. He argues that where the extension is, there is the colour too, i.e. in the mind.² He uses further arguments about pure and absolute Space;³ about Time;⁴ about relations which he treats as mental;⁵ number which for him is a creation of mind.⁶ Not all these arguments are equally sound or equally necessary to his conclusion.

¹ If we say—as Psycho-physical Parallelists do—that there is no causal connexion between the two series, the physical or the mental, we are granting just what Berkeley asserts when he says that 'bodies are entirely useless and serve to no manner of purpose' (*P. of H. K.*, Sec. 19 end)

In thinking out this theory as a whole it is well to remember that such a 'pattern' as Plato speaks of in the *Timaeus* may well be conceived as prescribing not merely conscious experiences and other events, but also their *connexions*—the real *action* of one substance upon another.

² *P. of H. K.*, Sec. 99

³ *Ib* Secs. III, II6, II7.

⁴ Secs. 97, 98.

⁵ Secs. 10, 11.

⁶ Sec. 12 Cf. Secs. 3, 45, 35, 18.